



# *Education for Change*

## *Untold Stories.....*



**Working towards Eradication of Child Labour**  
**PECUC's Learning**

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## Foreword

Child labour deprives children of their right to go to school and reinforces intergenerational cycles of poverty. Child labour refers to the exploitation of children through any form of work that deprives them from their childhood, interferes with their ability to attend regular school, and is mentally, physically, socially and morally harmful. Every child deserves to live a safe, secure and happy childhood. They need proper education, care and protection for growing into a sensible and responsible citizen. But engagement in child labour deprives them of these basic rights.

People's Cultural Centre (PECUC), a child rights focused voluntary organization, working since 1990, considers this issue of child labour as a major hindrance in the overall development of a child. Therefore, PECUC decided to make fight against this social evil as its focused agenda. While working in the community, PECUC found out that among other reasons, poverty is one of the major reasons for child labour and school drop out of children. PECUC has learnt that children, their parents, grandparents, their families and the community as a whole are trapped into a vicious circle of multiple problems which has led to gross violation of human rights. There is a need for developing a human rights culture where each and every individual can enjoy their rights to a life of dignity. To deal with this issue an overall integrated approach involving parents, community, duty bearer & key stakeholders is essential. PECUC has developed its own strategy and worked on it for eradication of child labour in all its interventional areas. This book is all about the work PECUC has painstakingly undertaken to fight against the social evil of child labour since its inception in 1990.



**Mr. Ranjan Kumar Mohanty,**  
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## Introduction to PECUC - Its Vision and Mission

Our society faces various challenges like poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, child labour and much more. There is still a major section of the society which is deprived of the basic necessities of life. In the first decade (1990-1999), PECUC worked with focus on people's welfare & protection, preservation and promotion of culture and cultural values keeping youth and their participation on priority agenda. Subsequently, PECUC from its experience could learn that the progressive change in society depends on the qualitative change in the upbringing of our children. Hence, it decided to focus its attention on children, their problems and the possible remedies. Soon, it extended its activities of strategic welfare especially for children, women, tribal, youths, drug addicts and the elderly. In the last decade (2000 – 2010), to deal with the multifaceted problems of children including the rights of children, exploitation and crimes against children, healthy and protected childhood, we stretched our ambience and focused on issues of disaster, income generation for underprivileged by promotion of self help groups & micro-enterprises. We marched forward and took up various other challenges including environment protection, national integration, food security, emergency response, reproductive health, health & sanitation, education and various other related fields. Since then PECUC has been continuing its journey with a mission of socio-cultural and economic development of the impoverished and marginalized section of the society with people's participation, particularly the youth, women & children as its corner stone.

The decade 2000-2010 was the period of professional growth and capacity enhancement as development leader in the state with national and international participation. In this decade, PECUC deployed professional staff, participated in different networks, initiated extensive research & application activities, developed alternative models, and focused on public policy research and advocacy. This change has brought PECUC an image of a respected development organization with priority focus on model developments in different pockets of the state.

From 2011-2020, PECUC concentrated its focus on the core theme of child rights. The field experience at the community level, gave us the realization that the healthy upbringing of a child is impossible if proper care is not taken of his/her rights. His/her rights are trampled when he/she is a member of a socially and economically backward family. The family being trapped in multifarious problems accepts violation of human rights of the child as fate. In order to get out of such a vicious circle, there is need to develop a human rights culture where each and every individual can enjoy their right to live a life of dignity. Hence, PECUC has prioritized to focus on the issues relating to child rights, deepening democracy, women empowerment, youth empowerment, health & sanitation, livelihood, rights of the senior citizen, disaster management and climate change adaptation, and persons with disability. PECUC directly works with the community, advocates for pro-poor policy and intends to advance human rights culture.

**PECUC Vision:** A world in which peace, justice and equality prevails, where people participate and have a say in their social and economic well-being by exercising their rights to a life of dignity, respecting cultural and natural diversity.



**PECUC Mission:** Our mission is to empower and enable children, young people, women, the elderly, other vulnerable and marginalized communities enabling them to participate powerfully in their overall development and to create and strengthen peoples' institutions that ensure, sustain and promote their wellbeing, security, inclusive development and a life of dignity.

### **Strategic Vision 2030:**

PECUC would continue to focus primarily on child rights during 2021-2030. While working at the community level PECUC has learnt that realization of child rights & the well being of children, more over a child friendly society cannot be thought off in isolation and their parents, grandparents, families and the communities need to be protected and strengthened. Hence, PECUC has prioritized to focus on the issues relating to Child Rights, Women Empowerment, Health, Hygiene & Sanitation, Emergency Management & Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation, Livelihood, Governance & Democracy, Youth Empowerment, Persons with Disability & Rights of the Older Persons these years.

**Area of Operation:** PECUC is carrying out grass root level actions at Keonjhar, Balasore, Kendrapara, Khordha, Cuttack, Rayagada, Nabrangpur & Mayurbhanj districts of Odisha & for campaigns on specific thematic proprieties, network & alliance building, public policy research & advocacy, trainings throughout the Union of India with focus on state of Odisha.

## **Background**

### **Overview of Child Labour Situation in India and Odisha**

According to Justice P.N.Bhagwati, former Chief Justice of India, "The child is a soul with a being, a nature and capacities of its own, who must be helped to find them, to grow into their maturity, into a fullness of physical and vital energy and the utmost breadth, depth and height of its emotional, intellectual and spiritual being; otherwise there cannot be a healthy growth of the nation."

According to a leading newspaper, 9 million children are now at risk of being into labour by the end of 2022 because of the COVID-19 situation. This huge leap in the number has been the first ever in the last two decades. This is happening and it's real and there has been a reverse in the downward trend that saw child labour fall by 94 million during 2000-2016. One in every 11 children in India works to earn a living as per Action Aid India. There are 33 million child labourers between the ages of 5-8 years in India as per Census 2011 and 10.13 million between the ages of 5-14 years. Considering that there are 444 million children in India under the age of 18, they form 37% of the total population in the country. This has set up a wake-up call for everyone.



## Defining Child labour

When we talk about eradicating child labour, we need to have a basic understanding of what exactly child labour is and what are the major reasons fueling their increase in numbers. When we say "child labour" it does not just mean children employed in work but it can be defined as children being deprived of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, which is harmful to their physical and mental development. It is the worst form of child rights violation. Child labour ends with damaging the physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual development, denying them of their basic rights to education, health and development.

### Defining a child

Tackling the child labour issue has also been a daunting task of all as in India we do not have a universal age defining the individual as a child. However, when we focus on child labour, a child is defined by the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986 as a person who is of 14 years old. Under the Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, a child is defined as the one who has not completed the age of 14 years and adolescent as the person who is already 14 years, but not completed 18 years of age. According to UNCRC child is person who is below 18 years of age and PECUC also regards a person below 18 years is child. Child Marriage Act, JJ Act, POCSO Act also accepts this view.

### What might be the reasons of increasing child labour?

Child labour has emerged as one of the serious issues in India and one of the major causes is acute poverty. In addition to poverty, debt and other socio-economic problems are also some of the main factors of child labour in India. Some of the other reasons are recurrent crises, population explosion, inadequate social protection measures, economic and social shocks/trauma due to COVID (in the present scenario), job/income loss of adults in the family, and more.

There are many interlinking factors contributing to the prevalence of child labour, however, it is both a cause and consequence of poverty. Household poverty compels children into the labour market to earn money. Some perform child labour to supplement family income while many in it are for survival. They miss out the opportunity to gain education further perpetuating poverty across generations, thus slowing down the economic growth and social development.

Child labour impedes children from gaining the skills and education they need to have opportunities of decent work as an adult. Inequality, lack of educational opportunities, traditions and cultural expectations contribute to persistence of child labour in India.

### Where India stands?

According to the ILO report, there are around 12.9 million children in India who are engaged in work between the ages of 7 to 17 years. When children are employed or doing unpaid work, they



are less likely to attend school or attend only intermittently, thus trapping them in the cycle of poverty. Millions of Indian girls and boys are going to work every day in quarries and factories, or selling cigarettes on the street. The majority of these children are between 12 and 17 years old and work up to 16 hours a day to help their families to make both ends meet. But child labour in India starts even earlier with an estimated 10.1 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 yearsold engaged in work.

According to data from Census 2011, the number of child labourers in India is 10.1 million of which 5.6 million are boys and 4.5 million are girls. The continuing persistence of child labour and exploitation poses a threat to national economy and has severe consequences for children such as undermining physical and mental health and denial of education.

As children get older, their involvement in employment also increases. In India, 20 percent of all children aged 15 to 17 years old are involved in hazardous industrial works. Measuring the exact scale of child labour in India is difficult as it is often hidden and under-reported. There are almost 18 million children between the ages of 7 to 17 years old who are considered "inactive" in India, neither in employment nor in school. These missing girls and boys in India are potentially subject to some of the worst forms of child labour.

According to a study by the ILO, the majority of the world's child labour (around 71 percent) is done in the agriculture sector, including cotton plantations and rice fields. Around 17 percent are employed as service staff, mainly as domestic workers or in restaurants, and another 12 percent of child labour is spread across jobs in the industry sector, including dangerous activities in mines.

Despite rates of child labour declining over the last few years, children are still used in child labour as bonded labour. They can be found working in the brick kilns, carpet weaving, garment making, domestic service, food and refreshment services, agriculture, fisheries, mining, tobacco industries, garages, and child pornography. Children are also used for cheap labour in industries such as steel extraction and gem polishing. The commercial sexual exploitation of children is among the worst forms of child labour and in India there are around 1.2 million children involved in prostitution.

### **Where Odisha stands?**

Odisha reported 2.15 lakhs child labourers in the state, thus representing about half of their number in the country, which was in the year 2013. Out of this, about 23,761 children were reported to work in hazardous sectors. The districts reporting the highest percentage were Koraput, Kalahandi and Sambalpur, which accounted for 52% of the total reported child labourers.

In February 2019, a written reply by the Minister of Labour and Employment in the Parliament disclosed that 10,826 Child Labour Act violation cases were reported in the country in the last four years of which only 6,032 cases (56%) went to the stage of prosecution. Odisha reported 4517 cases and accounts for almost 42% of the cases reported nationally.

On the basis of the empirical studies/surveys, working children in different districts are concentrated in certain occupations/processes which are injurious to human life and limb and



detrimental to growth and development of children. The child labours are generally found in agriculture sector, domestic work, road side dhabas and eateries, news paper hawking, weaving, vending, fishing, bidi making, labeling and packaging, collection and processing of minor forest produce, forest timber operations, collection and assembly of charcoal and coal, cattle and goat rearing, stone crushing, fireworks, weaving and dying, wood processing, clay image making, transport operations, loading and unloading in mining areas, building and construction operations, biscuit and bread making, selling of country liquor, cotton ginning, cycle/automobiles repairs and shops & commercial establishment, and rag picking in the state.

As per Census 2011, there are 92087 working children in the age group of 5-14 years in Odisha. The number was 377594 in 2001 Census. Majority of child labour in Odisha are engaged in agriculture sector, domestic work, fishing and other forms of hazardous jobs including bidi binding.

In many parts of Odisha, especially in tribal pockets which are prime sources of supplying child domestic workers to different urban and rural areas, child domestic work is considered a major component of socialisation.

80% of the state's population is dependent on agriculture, which is mostly rain fed-prey to erratic monsoons. The frequent occurrence of drought, flood and cyclone brings miseries to landless, small and marginal farmers also compel them to send their children to work in unorganised sectors as child labourers to supplement income to their family.

#### **Percentage of child labourers in districts**

Less than 2%	2-4%	4-6%	6 and more	Total
5	11	7	7	30

The survey by State Labour Dept showed that 2.3% minors were migrant labourers. These migrant child workers are engaged in brick making, salt manufacture, sugarcane harvesting, stone quarrying, construction, fisheries, plantation, and rice mills.

- The total child population in the age group of 5-14 years constitute 86.34 lakh, of which 3.78 lakh (4.4%) were engaged in various economically gainful activities and 94.4 per cent of them were engaged in rural areas.
- 1.10 lakh (29.1%) children were categorised as main workers while 2.68 lakh (70.9%) were marginal workers.

## Child labour data of Odisha from various sources

Source	Children
• Population in the age group of 6-14 as per census 2011	75,95,282
• Population in the age group of 6-17 years as per census 2011	99,31,966
• Enrolment (I-VIII) 2011-12 (DISE 2011)	65,19,680
• Drop out (Age 6-17 years) AHS 2011-12	12.9% (12,81,353)
• Working children as per NSSO 2009-10 (66 round)	1,34,563
• Children aged 5-14 years engaged in work as per Annual Health Survey 2011-12 (As per census 2011 the population of 5-14 years of age is 84,23,393)	4.1% (3,45,359)
• NCLP as on 31st June 2013 (Enrollment)	38589
• NCLP as on 31st June 2013 (Mainstreamed)	1,37,096

## How PECUC Defines Child Labour?

- Child labour is the worst form of child rights violation. Child labour includes children prematurely leading adult lives, working with or without wages, under conditions damaging their physical, mental, social, emotional & spiritual development, denying them their basic rights to education, health & development. Any child out of school is a potential child labourer.

## Our Strategies for eradication of child labour:

- Mainstreaming the Working Children through Education
- Promoting Child Protection mechanism at Community level
- Strengthening family, community- Counseling to parents and family members/community
- Promoting alternative livelihood systems for the parents of child labour families
- Advocacy for appropriate legislations, policies, action plans and enforcement of existing laws
- Workforce Capacity building
- Promoting child participation through Children collectives (Child Rights clubs)
- Prevention through preparatory education for the potential child labours, Bridge course for drop outs, supplementary education for school going Children
- Undertaking a campaign i.e Sradha Abhijan a Campaign for love & affection, care & protection and Education
- Motivation camp for Children
- Empowering Mothers
- Environment building – Massive awareness generation through different media
- Skill Development of children within 15 to 18 years



- Coordination with duty bearers including service providers, elected representatives including Panchayatiraj institution functionaries to be more responsive to address the issues of child labour.

## Intervention for Change

### Rescue operations



Identifying and rescuing child labour was the first step towards eradication of child labour. PECUC along with the Government has participated in many rescue operations in its operational area. Children were rescued and mainstreamed in the day schools and residential schools. PECUC is committed to the eradication of child labour through building public opinion, highlighting violation inflicted upon child labourers and promoting justice through fact finding and public interest litigation, advocacy, lobbying & monitoring regional, national & international developments, and moreover, by developing successful alternative strategy to eradicate child labour. PECUC is also actively involved with **Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL)**, a nationwide network committed for the eradication of child labour, as one of the founder members of its Odisha chapter since 1992 & taken the responsibility of coordinating agency in the state in 1999 and hosted national secretariat from 2003 to 2007.

PECUC has been able to identify, rescue, rehabilitate and mainstream through education of **36346 child labourers**. The process of tracking the child labourers, drop outs and irregular students and bringing the back to school by providing bridge courses is continuing. 650 children between 15 and 18 years of age have been rescued from child labour and have been provided with skill development training, which has enabled them to earn their livelihood and live a life of dignity.

### Organising residential motivation camps

Education is an important aspect during a child's upbringing, as it allows children to develop the necessary skills they need to progress in their life in this modern world. However, labour at an early stage



prevents children from going to school and obtaining such abilities. Hence, PECUC after rescue tries to motivate and bring the child into school and mainstream them into education.

PECUC has been organizing motivational camps for children every year since 2007. Children of different categories such as child labour, slow learner, children never enrolled in School and dropouts attend this camp. They are motivated and encouraged through various child- friendly methods towards formal Education. Every year around 100 children participate in this camp. Children are engaged with multifarious activities like drawing, yoga, exercise, storytelling, dance, song etc in the camp. The underlying motive is to generate interest for education and regular schooling.







## **Sradha Abhijan – an initiative by PECUC**

### **Concept of Sradha Abhijan**

PECUC selected tribal, dalit & other socioeconomic backward community dominated areas as its operational area as child labour and exploitation were rampant and was considered as the prime source of supply of child labour to other locations. The areas became more vulnerable after super cyclone 1999, when people lost their livelihood. There was every possibility that a large number of children would be compelled to join labour force. Seeing the necessity, PECUC introduced an initiative called

“Sradha Abhijan” – a campaign aiming at ensuring affection, care and protection & education for children in this post disaster situation, which further extended to the other operational areas of PECUC. Child Friendly Space - Shradha Bhawans were established, which is now a flagship programme of PECUC.



#### **The major objectives of Sradha Bhawan:**

- To ensure there is no child labour in the operational area.
- To create child friendly environment or space in the operational villages.
- To develop interest among the children towards formal education.
- To make the parents and formal school teachers responsible for the development of these children from the backward community.
- To develop creativity and explore full potentials of the children
- To protect, propagate and promote rights of the children through absolute community participation.
- To boost the process of physical, social and psychological improvement of children.
- To revitalize their culture, tradition and local environment to suit their interest and benefit the children.
- To strengthen the village education committees and other community based organisations for protection of child rights.

#### **Shradha Bhawan as the centre of motivation**

Sradha Bhawans were established as a part of Sradha Abhijan to protect, propagate, and promote the rights of the children. It is a motivation-cum-resource centre to provide preparatory education



for beginners, bridge course for drop outs and supplementary education to the school going children.

### **Sradha Bhawan as a Force for Social Change**

- Sradha Bhawan has acted as a resource center for the children, be it working, school going or non-school going/drop out children.

Those coming to Shradha Bhawan are free to utilise the existing resources for their development.

- It provides joyful learning for the preparatory & non-school going children & bridge course for the children who were drop out and helping them join the mainstream.

- It provides supplementary education for school going children.

- Children enjoy playing many sports, both indoor and outdoor games, at

Shradha Bhawan, thus ensuring overall development of a child.

- Regular monthly health check up is also conducted with the support of local PHCS and interested professionals by organising immunization camps, health camps, etc.

- Sradha Bhawan actively shares information, provides guidance & carries out advocacy for child development & promotion of participation of community, PRIs & other related stakeholders/individuals, strengthening VECs.

- It provides counselling to parents, employers, formal school teachers, PRIs & the community as a whole.

- Sradha Bhawan focuses on the formation & strengthening parents committee to enroll and ensure retention of working, loitering and dropout children to school.

- Shradha Bhawan has been active in formation of Mother's Self Help Groups, working towards socioeconomic empowerment of women.

- SISU MAHASABHA formation at village level has been a strategic intervention by Sradha Bhawan for protecting child rights.

Sradha Bhawan has been actively holding sensitization and awareness campaigns on the need and relevance of education and other aspects relating to child rights.





Apart from the above-stated points, Shradha Bhawan has been playing a major role in:

- Intervening on specific child right violation cases.
- Capacity building of village youths on child rights and issues relating to it.
- Sensitizing on mother and child health.
- Encouraging children to assume responsibility.
- Creating a inclusive society that will respect, care and protect the children.
- Enhancing and supporting children's participation.
- Stimulating children's interest to learn.
- Widening learning horizons for children.
- Dealing with psycho-social improvement of children.
- Building discipline and civic sense in children.
- Enhancing interest between formal school teachers and the community.
- Working for strengthening of formal school system.

**Shradha Bhawan believes in interactive ways of providing education to children.**

- ☑ Songs
- ☑ Pictures
- ☑ Stories relating to different birds & animals
- ☑ Education from day to day experiences
- ☑ Role play
- ☑ Puzzles & warm up games



## Development of the Course Curriculum

A curriculum has been developed for the Shradha Bhawans by the eminent teachers and personnels from District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) with due concern of other consultants. The contents of the curriculum includes knowing numbers through songs, mathematics education through stories, animals, songs of bird's tone, flowers, alphabets, months, days and behavioural pattern, etc.

## Case study on Sradha Bhawan

A campaign to promote love, affection, care & protection and education for the children was conceptualized and initiated during post super cyclone period to help the traumatized children to start a normal life in Baliantha block of Khordha district. Later on it was extended to function as Shradha Bhawans—a child friendly space, working as village level Child Right Resource Centers in the Keonjhar district.



SB centers serve as resource centres for all children in the functional village. Any child, whether working or school going, or non school going can come to SB to utilise any of existing resources at no cost. Young children in the age group of 3-5 years are provided pre-school education and children above 6 years of age who have never attended school are provided with preparatory education and enrolled in the formal schools through these Shradha Bhawans. Bridge course is provided to school drop outs and they are mainstreamed into the full time formal schooling. The Centres also provide supplementary education to the school children. The SB houses books on various subjects of interest for children like story books, biographies, text books, science experiment books, plays, etc. that are written in a simple manner for children to understand. Children also avail the sports and play materials kept at the SB. There is provision for both outdoor and indoor games for the children. Children are accompanied on exposure visit to enhance their understanding of local environment.

Parents committee has been formed by SB centres to enroll and ensure retention of working, loitering and dropout children to school. Mother's self help groups were formed in the operational areas to alleviate poverty so that they would send their children to school instead of engaging them in domestic chores or sending them to earn money for supporting the family. The centres hold counseling for parents, employers, teachers, and community as a whole to understand the importance of formal education for their children and create awareness about the different rights of the children. Sensitization and awareness campaign are also conducted on the need and relevance of education and other aspects relating to child rights. Children are being encouraged to



assume responsibility. Support is extended to enhance children's participation in the decision making process. These steps have resulted in broadening the learning horizons of children, psycho-social improvement and in inculcating discipline and civic sense in children.

We have an interesting and amazing story of a 14 year old boy Budhia (Fake Name) of Patna block of Keonjhar district who was earlier a child labour not going to school. He used to work in his father's field and would watch the children play and enjoy learning in Sradha Bhawan. He would stand near the window and watch all that happen. Though he was interested in studying, the hunger and financial burden in his family forced him to earn. His reluctance to go to the field and interest in learning at Sradha Bhawan attracted the attention of Urmila Mohanta, In charge of that SB centre. She informed the authorities of the organization about the matter. The volunteers of the Sradha Bhawan approached his parents and brought the mother of Budhia into the Self Help Group of mothers. Budhia was admitted into the Sradha Bhawan. After completion of his bridge course, PECUC decided to admit him in regular school. Budhia is our flag bearer who with his will power and interest crossed all the barriers and got education that was hunting him till 14 years.

Not only Budhia, many drop out child labourers are being brought to SB centre to help them mainstream into the formal schools. These children mostly work in field or take cattle for grazing.

### **Mainstreaming Through Education**

Education is the only solution to eradicate child labour. With this vision, PECUC in all its operational areas started mainstreaming the drop outs & child labour through education by providing them with bridge course and supplementary education. The Sradha Bhawan centres became the ray of hope in the darkness which was going to show these children a way to their future. The Shardha Bhawan centres set up in villages serve as a resource centre for all children. Any child, whether working or school going, or non-school going visit these Sradha Bhawan centres and get access to all kinds of learning and playing materials with no fees. Joyful learning for children-Preparatory education for non-school going children -bridge course for school dropouts were given to bring them back to the fold of education.

### **Ensuring enrolment & retention in schools/ residential schools:**

Special care was taken for the enrolment of all children who were at school going age. The volunteers of PECUC interacted with school teachers and ensured the enrolment of all children of the village. The main problem was their retention in the school. The wretched financial condition of their parents sometimes forced them to leave school to help in their house hold chores, which was a very common problem for the girl children. When both the parents are out for wage earning, they also send their children to other villages to work as domestic servant, bagalia (or goat grazer), helper in road side dhaba or other such chores to bring some extra money.



PECUC took special care to avoid such incidents by imparting training to teachers on RTE Act, Child Labour Act, and child marriage act besides training them on adopting joyful teaching and learning methods. The School Management Committee of the schools were also made aware of their responsibilities to monitor that no child should remain out of school and the rights of the children being violated needs to be addressed. They were requested to conduct regular meetings for the development of school. Sradha Bhawan has played an instrumental role in encouraging child participation in SMCs where they can put forward their demands like construction of school boundary, toilet, drinking water, playground, etc. Suggestion boxes are also kept in the schools where children are free to give their suggestions without disclosing their identity.

### **Children as peer educators: Forming Children Collectives, i.e. Sisusabha in action**

Participation of children is equally important for their awareness and education on protection of Child Rights. Child Rights Club (CRC), locally known as Sishu Sabhawas formed at the village level with children between the age group of 6-15 years from the respective villages. These informal institutions have been established to create opportunity for children to be familiar with their rights, to realise their dreams and attain their full potential.



The vision behind the formation of Sisusabhas is to create a safe, secure and healthy society for all the children and the mission aims at absolute enjoyment of every right by every child. The objective is to encompass every child in the school network; bring all dropout children to school through counseling, eradication of child labour, discourage discrimination based on gender, caste, and religion, to learn care and share in the family so as to shape an ideal village and ideal school, protect all children in natural calamities and involve all children in the process of immunization to march ahead towards a healthy, aware and cultured society.

The members of Sisusabha are selected on the basis of certain principles. He/she must be between the age group of 6 to 14 years, must be from the concerned village irrespective of caste, creed, gender, and religion.

The meeting of Sisusabha is held once in a week with full attendance and discussions on the rights of children, benefits of education, current affairs of state and national importance, traffic rules, protection of forest and functioning of Panchayatiraj system, are carried forward by the children. A membership register is maintained in every Sisusabha and election is being held once in a year to select President, vice-president and Secretary & Asst Secretary.



The president, Vice President verifies and ensures presence of all members' in the meeting, presides over the meeting, prepares plan and executes them properly, discusses only on selected topics in the meeting and disseminates all type of information and train the members. The Secretary and Asst Secretary convene meetings, write resolution and read aloud before the members, inform different news from Newspapers, maintain discipline and arrange cultural programmes.

The members of Sisusabha work as groups to mobilise parents and other stakeholders to ensure development work like school and village, etc.

#### Case Studies:



Raju Nayak (fake name), a 14-year-old from Patna block in Keonjhar district, left school in Class VI to graze goats for the villagers to help feed his family. During the regular Saturday Sisusabha meetings, Raju would listen intently, often forgetting about the goats. The Sisusabha members noticed him and invited him to join their discussions. Raju eagerly shared his feelings, problems, and desire to continue his studies. The Sisusabha members persuaded Raju's parents to let him attend Sradha Bhawan and Sisusabha. After prolonged persuasion, our volunteers convinced his parents to send him. Raju gradually became actively involved in all the activities and emerged as a lead student at Sradha Bhawan. PECUC plans to send him to formal school after he completes his bridge course.

The Sisusabha members in Ghatabalijodi village rescued two boys, Babuna Munda and Prasanna Munda (both fake names), from bonded labor (bagalia) and enrolled them in Sradha Bhawan.



In Guludiposi village, Sisusabha members persuaded Rasmi Naik (fake name), who had left school to do household chores, to return to her studies. With the guidance of Sradha Bhawan, she was admitted to Class VI at U.G.U.P School in Swampatna. The school teachers appreciated the Sisusabha members for their efforts.

In Banamahuldiha village, Sisusabha members enrolled three dropout children in Class VI after organizing a village rally for the "School Chalo Abhiyan" (Let's Go to School) campaign.

Rajesh Naik, President of Saraswati Sisusabha in Badapatana village, along with other members, convinced the parents of Bula Naik and Pinu Naik (both fake names), who were working in a roadside hotel near Patana Primary School, to enroll them in Sradha Bhawan through continuous counseling.

### **Drop out student gets back to studies**

Srikant Munda (fake name), a nine-year-old boy, worked alongside his parents, who were daily wage earners. The family lived in acute financial hardship and poverty. Srikant had to leave school to take care of villagers' livestock. Although he was interested in studying, his family's situation prevented him from continuing. One day, Sisusabha members invited Srikant to their meeting, which he enthusiastically attended. He was greatly encouraged and happy to see other children dancing and playing joyfully. After that meeting, he began regularly attending Sradha Bhawan and participated in a camp at Brahmanideo organized by PECUC, where he learned the importance of education. Upon returning from the camp, Srikant convinced his parents to enroll him in school again. His father, seeing his enthusiasm, enrolled him in Class III. Now, Srikant is continuing his studies with dreams of a better future, refusing to do menial jobs at his age. The smiles of children like Srikant motivate PECUC volunteers to reach out to inaccessible areas, enroll dropouts in school, and seek alternative livelihoods for the parents of poverty-stricken children.

### **SISUSHABHA –Child rights Club: Motivating children to show their inner talent**

The Sishusabha members of the Jadichatar, Chakundapal GP Sisusabha in Patana Block are actively involved in various village and personal development activities. Monalisa Mohanta, a member of Tulashi Munda Sisusabha from Jadichatar village in Kendujhar, is one such active participant. She is currently in Class VIII, while her younger brother is in Class II. Her parents are marginal farmers who struggle to make ends meet. Despite these hardships, Monalisa excels in her studies and extracurricular activities.

Recognizing her talent in singing, the Sisusabha members and Sradha Bhawan volunteers helped her participate in the "Sishu Rajja" program on All India Radio, Keonjhar Station. The recording took place on September 19, 2018, and was broadcasted at 7:25 AM on September 23, 2018. During the program, Monalisa sang a song and shared her hobbies and dreams. Her participation has inspired other children in the area.



The SB centers are popular for inspiring and motivating children in education and other talents. Monalisa's story has become a beacon of inspiration for others.

Children realize their rights and duty through participation in Child Rights Clubs (Sisusabha), Child Protection Committees, School Management Committees, Gramsabha, and Pallisabha. They also prepare children's charter of suggestions to submit to political party representatives. They engage in research, as child reporters and Goodwill Ambassadors to promote child rights and the right to play. During Sisumela, a week-long children's festival, they actively participate in preparing school safety plans, PECUC's child protection policy, promoting SDG campaigns, environmental protection through tree planting etc.

## **Promoting child protection mechanism at community level**

### **Formation and strengthening of child rights protection committee from village to block level**

Child Rights Protection Committees are formed at the village level, involving PRI members, Anganwadi workers, PTA/MTA/teachers, ASHA, senior citizens, ANM, CBOs, Women SHGs, and concerned citizens. The members focus on protecting every child in the community from abuse and exploitation. They work on raising awareness about child rights, addressing protection issues among the community and parents, gathering information on children, vulnerability mapping, and linking government schemes and programs to families of vulnerable children. They also establish connections with child protection structures such as police stations, the Child Rights Commission, CWC, and JJB. They disseminate information about laws, legislation, programs, and policies, intervene in violations, conduct rescues, counseling, rehabilitation, reintegration, and raise resources for crisis and intervention-related expenses. They visit worksites, schools, playgrounds, children's homes, and other meeting places for children to ensure their safety and well-being. They raise awareness among other stakeholders as needed.

The committees meet regularly, at least once a month, and during emergencies. They maintain registers, fact-finding reports, meeting proceedings, and more. PECUC facilitates capacity building for the committee members by providing training on various child protection laws, including those related to child labor, child marriage, and the RTE Act, as well as government schemes and programs. At the block level, PECUC organizes sensitization programs involving Block Level CPC members. Experts from various fields are invited to train the committee members on child protection issues, relevant laws, and government schemes.

### **Case Study:**

Keonjhar district is one of the most underdeveloped areas in Odisha. Among its 13 blocks, Patna Block is particularly disadvantaged. Most residents rely on agriculture and daily labor for their livelihoods, with a majority living below the poverty line. Raju Munda (fake name), aged 12, and Mahes Munda (fake name), aged 14, are from Patna Block. Raju's father is a daily laborer, while Mahes lost his father before he was born. Due to their poor economic conditions, both boys dropped out of school to work as cow herders. A local broker approached their parents to take



them as bonded laborers (Bagalia) for a year, and their uneducated and unaware parents consented.

However, Mr. Karanikar Barik, President of the CRPC, along with other members, rescued the boys just before they were set to leave the village. They convinced the parents not to send their children away as laborers at such a young age. Thanks to the sustained efforts of the CRPC members, Raju and Mahes are now attending Sraddha Bhawan and showing significant improvements in their studies.

Jhuma Munda (fake name), a 14-year-old girl from Madhapur village in Patana GP, is in Class IX. Her parents, both daily laborers, often have to search for work in other villages, struggling to meet the daily needs of their five-member family. As her annual exams approached, her parents couldn't afford the Rs. 50 school fee, and as a result, she was not allowed to sit for the exams. The CRPC members noticed this issue, interacted with the school teachers, and paid the fees for Jhuma, enabling her to take the exam. This noble initiative has been greatly appreciated in the village.

### **Protecting children in family/Counselling of parents**

Protecting children within families and counseling parents is a delicate issue, as many parents are unaware that by not sending their children to school and involving them in work for a little extra money, they are jeopardizing their children's futures and childhoods. Poverty and lack of awareness contribute significantly to this mindset. Recognizing this, PECUC realized that counseling parents to change their mindset is crucial to eradicating child labor.

**Parent Counseling:** Through continuous visits, meetings, motivation, and interaction with parents, positive outcomes have been achieved. Parents are now regularly sending their children to Sraddha Bhawan, and the enrollment of children is increasing. There has also been a noticeable change in parents' attitudes toward their children. Although progress is gradual, the results are promising.

**Improving Economic Conditions of Families:** Poverty is the primary driver of child labor. Many children are forced into work due to the need for survival and to support their families. Vulnerability to child labor is higher in impoverished areas and increases during crises. Improving access to sustainable sources of income through alternative livelihood strategies is crucial to reducing reliance on child labor. PECUC aims to provide opportunities for parents and caregivers of working children to earn better incomes, thereby reducing their dependence on their children's wages.

**Promoting Alternative Livelihoods for Parents of Child Laborers:** PECUC has generated alternative livelihood opportunities for families of child labourers by establishing mother/women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and strengthening linkages for income-generating activities. Women SHGs engage in various income-generating activities such as kitchen gardening, turmeric powder preparation, tamarind processing for the market, goat rearing, poultry farming, leaf plate stitching, pottery, etc. Similarly, farmer groups have been formed and trained in organic farming, vermicompost preparation, seed processing, and linking with government schemes like MGNREGA, aiming to enhance their professions and increase their daily incomes.



It's just the beginning...

**Name of the Women Group - Maa Laxmi Women Group, Total members - 11, Name of the Village - Padmakesharpur , Name of the GP – Jamunaposi, Block - Patna, Dist - Keonjhar**

Maa Laxmi Women Group was formed on November 10, 2012. Initially due to poor economic condition, the women were not interested to form groups. But when they understood the objective behind it, they came forward and showed interest to form the group. In the earlier days, they collected 2 handful of rice from each member's house and created saving fund by selling the rice that assisted them to maintain the group. As the time passed, their savings increased and the group members took loan for their child's education and to meet the medical expenses.



Gradually, they opened saving account in the bank for their group. As a project activity, PECUC decided to support the group to enter into some income generation activities. The group showed their interest for goatery business. They were supported with 6 goats and 6 members gave goatkids to other 5 members.

They also sold a baby goat for 1500 rupees and kept the amount in the bank. Their business increased gradually day by day. Now each member is getting Rs 2000 as profit every year which helps them to meet their expenses. They used the amount to purchase dress and school copies for their children. Now they have 25 goats. They are taking proper care of them. Looking at the benefit of formation of SHGs, other women members of the village started



forming new SHGs. They are taking active part in identifying and addressing child labour issues, child marriage cases, violence on women and girls, cleaning of village pond and tube well, getting access to different Govt. schemes and programmes, mobilizing the community, and increasing women participation.





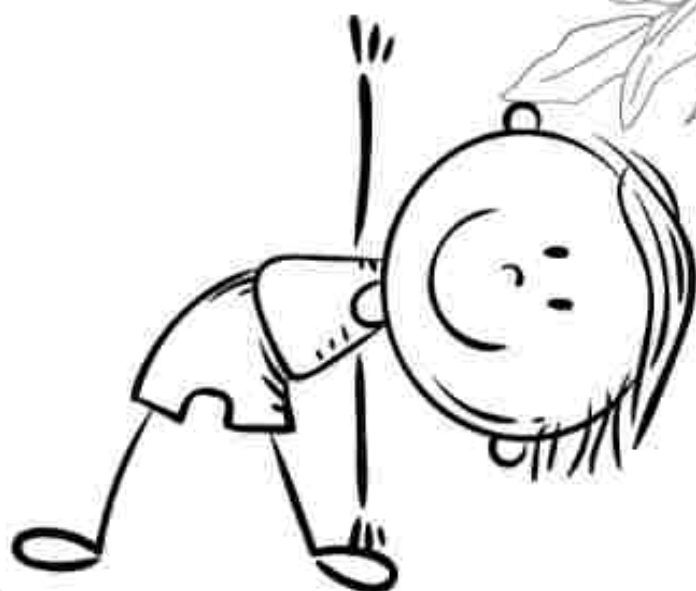


### Village pond linkage with MGNREGS

One village pond was linked with MGNREGS scheme for renovation by Jagat Janani farmers' groups, Bulgar sahi, Nalabilla for multi-purpose uses by the community. 60 thousand cubic tons of water is stored in this village pond for agricultural purposes mainly for irrigation, bathing and washing clothes. Knowledge transfer was done to the farmers who were then able to link with government schemes being the member of SEED project of PECUC. They started getting daily work, hence financial condition of their families improved. This additional income of the farmer's families enabled them to send their children to school instead of making them drop outs and sending them for wage earning.







### **Strengthening the family system through Farmer's Group**

Nuagaon village comes under Rajnagar GP having 15 households. Most of the people depend upon agriculture for their livelihood. With an objective to do agriculture in a scientific manner and to get more yield, Dharanidhar Farmer Group was formed in 2013 consisting of 10 members. They collected Rs 10 from each member in every month as savings and kept the money in the bank account. Before formation of farmer group, the members did yield 7 to 8 sacks of paddy per acre using traditional method of paddy cultivation. Due to their poor state, they also involved their children in labour and they could not go to school and eventually dropped out. And child labour is mainly an agricultural issue in the states like Odisha that mainly depend on agriculture as their primary livelihood source.



PECUC team came up with the farmer's training programme twice a year and high yielding to skill train the farmers in SRI method of paddy cultivation, which was less expensive. They soon applied for Farmer's ID to get benefit from Agriculture dept. They have now got 17 qtl paddy per acre with a total profit of Rs 30,000. The profit generated from the cultivation is going to add value to their quality of life. Each member got a profit of Rs.1500. From the money they kept Rs 500 in their bank account and the rest amount they could spend more on the education of their children and letting them attend school.



Name of the Farmer's group: - Dharanidhar Farmer's group

Total members: -10, Village – Nuagaon, G.P:- Rajnagar, Block:- Patna , Dist:- Keonjhar







## Awareness Building

Accelerated awareness alone can help in eliminating child labour. Parental and community awareness on the evils of child labour can prevent disruption in schooling and pushing the children into labour. Lack of awareness and understanding on the part of parents creates a situation where traffickers prey upon children who usually end up in child labour. Awareness of the community can comprehend and respond to children's issues more effectively.

PECUC gives priority to awareness campaigns, as the people in the remote corner are generally unaware of the evil effects of child labour and for the reason become prey to the ill practice. PECUC has undertaken many campaigns like campaign against child labour, rally, signature campaign, 44 days campaign to end child labour, social media campaign, block level, district level and state level advocacy workshops, various competitions like drawing, painting, essay, debate among children assigning eradication of child labour as the theme, sand art at Puri, Bhubaneswar, media advocacy, IEC materials, etc., to create a sense of responsibility among the adults and to make the children realize their rights and duties.

### Awareness through IEC materials

IEC materials like poster, leaflet, brochure, booklet, videos, walling, etc., were prepared to generate awareness among the people. These IEC materials focus on child labour laws and Acts, schemes and programmes of Govt., Information on organic farming, livelihood activities like goatery, media chasa, lakha chasa, bee keeping, mushroom cultivation, vermin compost and other such information for the families of the child labour. The education provided through IEC materials went a long way, farmers started reviving their traditional method of farming by using organic compost and women SHGs started involving in various income generation activities like goatery, poultry, mushroom cultivation, turmeric processing and many such other activities which helped them to improve their financial condition. Parents instead of engaging their children in the labour activities started sending their children to school, which showed a sharp decline in the dropout rates and increased enrolment in the school.

### 44 days campaign to end child labour

PECUC started a 44 days campaign to end child labour in all its field areas to create mass awareness about child labour. This campaign starts on 30th April on National Anti-Child Labour Day and ends on 12th June, World Day against Child labour. Rally, signature campaign, workshops, poster campaign, sand art, various competitions, debates among children, etc., are carried out in every operational areas of PECUC as well as in Bhubaneswar. Many high ranking officials of Govt. and Labour dept, personnel from media along with celebrities of Cine world, children groups, youth groups, and women groups participated in this campaign. Together they advocate for the eradication of child labour.









## Network & Alliances

PECUC has worked with various networks and alliances to eradicate the evil of child labour. PECUC has worked with Dept. of Labour and various CSOs for achieving the goal of child labour free society. PECUC has involved itself in various networks to broaden its knowledge, horizon and to work extensively in a broader periphery.

- Hosting the State Secretariat of Odisha Alliance for Child rights [OACR], an alliance of civil society organizations working for children's rights in Odisha.
- Secretary, PECUC is the Executive Committee Member and the former Chairperson of National Action & Coordination Group for ending violence against children [NACG EVAC] India, a country level civil society platform of SAIEVAC – South Asia Initiative to End violence Against Children, an Inter-Governmental Apex Body of SAARC & Presently PECUC is the National Secretariat of NACG EVAC India.
- State Core Team Member of Destination Unknown Children on Move –DUCOM campaign.
- PECUC was hosting Odisha State Secretariat of CACL from 1999 to 2003
- PECUC hosted National Secretariat of Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL) –A Network of more than 6000 child rights / anti child labour groups from 2003-2007 & presently is the National Executive Committee Member of CACL.

## Visible Change Processes

### Micro level changes

The effort of PECUC is glaringly visible in all its operational areas. Parents are sending their children to SB centres, Anganwadi and schools. The livelihood activities of families are showing the sign of drastic improvement. The CBOs are advocating for the promotion and protection of child rights, the youth groups are actively participating in advocacy processes, and the women groups are also keeping their eyes open for any drop outs and child labour in their respective villages. The Sisusabha or Child right club members are also monitoring the situation in their village and any



plight of a child is taken into consideration. Village Level Child Protection Committees are also functioning properly and coming to action in cases of necessity. The PRI members are also taking child right violation issues at priority.

### **Macro level changes**

Child labour is one of the gravest problems faced by the Indian society for a long time. As the problem is a roadblock in India's economic development, the country has come up with many laws and policies to eradicate child labour from the society. In 1979, the Central Government formed the first statutory committee to analyse on the issue of child labour in India. One of their major observations was that the problem of child labour is inextricably linked to poverty. Taking into account of Gurupadaswamy Committee, the Union Government enacted the Child Labour (prohibition and regulation) Act, in 1986. Apart from this there are various other acts and laws to put a check on child labour including the Factories Act, 1948, The Mines Act, 1952, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) of Children Amendment Act, 2015, the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 and many other schemes and programmes. Various statutory bodies have also been created to protect the children from all types of exploitations including child labour.

## **Stories of Change**

**When you have a dream, you have got to grab it and never let go** and Samita (Fake Name) realized the credibility behind the sentence and expressed her hidden wish to rejoin school and restart her studies which was being disrupted due to the death of her mother out of covid. She was en route to accepting the harsh reality till life put her on the mat. The responsibility of the family (comprises of her little brother and father) comes on her little shoulder as her father is a daily labourer and he left house in the early morning leaving them alone. Samita had to do all the household chores as her brother was also going school and after finishing all the household chores, she hardly got time to relax and finally she was being insisted to left her studies.

In the mean time, the volunteers of PECUC visited her place and during interaction the whole story came to light and her father was asked about the discontinuance of her education. He strongly objected saying after the death of his wife nobody is there to look after the family and if she will go to school then who will take care of the family? However, continuous counseling by the PECUC team resulted in positive outcome. Samita also revealed her inner wish to continue her education but was apprehensive about her father's approval. Looking at her daughter's interest Abhimanyu also agreed to get her admit into school but as Samita left her studies in class 8th and yet to be admitted in class 9th and there is no school in their village area which was again the cause of his



reluctance to send her too far. His concern with regard to the safety and security of the child was also addressed by the team by sending her with other children in their village.

Finally, Samita got admitted in class-9th at the Girl's high school, Balakati of Baliana block with the help of PECUC volunteers and now she goes to school regularly and attending classes, interacting with friends and each day moving a step forward towards pursuing her dream as revealed by Samita expressing her gratitude towards PECUC.

### **Ramu Munda (Fake Name) Back to School**

Ramu Munda of Patna block of Keonjhar district was reading in 5th class when his father expired. After the death of his father Ramu stayed back and never returned to school for one year. When the Village level Child Protection Committee members came to know about Ramu Munda's situation, they visited his house and met his mother and talked about Ramu Munda's situation and make her understand the importance of education for her son. They also took initiative and admitted Ramu in the 6th class. Ramu is now regularly going to school. One child is saved from becoming a child labour and working early for earning his livelihood. Children in those tribal belts of Keonjhar are easily converted to child labour if timely precaution is not taken. Keeping them in school can be the solution to this problem.

### **Back to Education Anil Munda and Raka Munda (Fake Name)**

These children in project area have been out of school for more than 1.5 years. Anil Munda from a village of Patna block of Keonjhar used to study in class 6. But he left school and took to grazing his family's goats and cattle for helping his parents. Project team of PECUC, motivated him and counselled his parents to let him join the Sradha Bhawan to continue education. He is now happy to get back to his studies.

Raka Munda, age 12 studying in class 6th, taking care of cattle to support their parents as schools are closed of the same village of Patna block. His parents are not concerned about the continuation of his education. The sisusabha members and the volunteers counseled his parent and he is coming to Sradha Bhawan

### **Happiness is going to school**

Rinki Munda (Fake name), aged 8, is living in a village of Patna Block of Keonjhar with her parents. Her parents are daily wage labourers. Both of her parents hesitated to send her to school because both of them were working, so they wanted her daughter to look after the house. When PECUC volunteers and CPC members came across this issue, they immediately counselled her parents. Now they have enrolled Rinki in school. Rinki is very happy about going to school.

### **Children should be in school....**

Education is the prime and only way through which the underprivileged can escape the vicious cycle of poverty. PECUC has been trying tirelessly to bring poor and underprivileged children to school



and provide them with a basic education. Here is Rima, an underprivileged child of a tribal village, who marched to school with our initiative.

Rima Munda (Fake Name), a 7-year-old child from a village of Patna block of Keonjhar, lives with her parents and two siblings. Her parents are daily wage workers and own a small patch of land. Her father works as a cow grazer in the village, and her mother does household work at other's houses to earn their livelihood. Their unsteady income forces the family to skip many meals. Her parents did not have adequate resources and awareness to send their children to school. The plight of Rima came to the attention of volunteers from PECUC and CPC members who tried to find out the reason for Rima not attending the school. They came to know that she could not get admission to the school due to her lack of an Aadhar card. Rima was sad to see her friends go to school, but she was helpless to do anything. The PECUC volunteers helped her apply for and obtain an Aadhar Card and approached the school for her admission. This year, in the coming session, Rima will be enrolled in the school with her Aadhar card. Her parents are very happy that their little angel would fly to school and be one among others to march forward for a better life free of economic hardship. Rima's joy knows no bounds, thinking about the thrill of going to school and making her parents proud one day. Rima's parents expressed their gratitude and thanked PECUC for its support and help in getting her admitted into the school and paving her way to learning.

#### **Mala is happy to attend school**

Mala (Fake name), is a ten-year-old girl from a remote village of Patna block of Keonjhar district. She lost her father when she was very young. Her mother works as daily labourer to manage her family of six including 5 children. The family was living in abject poverty and did not have any landed property or cattle. Poverty did not allow Mala to go to school. She was helping her mother in the household work. When it was difficult to arrange two meals in a day, the family could not think of sending the children to school. Her mother was planning to ask Mala to work as House maid in the village to add to her mother's income. The case of Mala came to the notice of CPC members and PECUC volunteers; they discussed the matter with the school teacher and her mother also. They convinced her mother to allow Mala to go to school. With the encouragement of the volunteers, Mala joined school in the 2020 session. She is very much happy with the thought of attending the school. The mother and the child thanked PECUC for their support, motivation, and encouragement in bringing a smile to the face of the helpless child.

#### **Sila (Fake name) resumed her education...**

Sila, an eleven-year-old girl from a village of Patna block of Keonjhar, lives with her parents and two brothers. Her parents are daily wage earners and fight to manage the family with their unstable income from daily wage. She stopped going to school when she was in class 4th because she had to look after her younger brothers at home when her mother was out for work. The CPC members of that village took cognizance of the matter and discussed the matter with her parents. They counseled the girl and motivated her parents to send her to school. It was very difficult initially to make the family understand the importance of education and how it could change the lives of the



family members. Her parents were assured that they would not have any financial burden if they sent their child to the school. Post counseling, she joined Shradha Bhawan run by PECUC. Very soon, she developed an interest in studies. She then started regularly attending the school and also actively participated in all the activities of the institution. A little support can help the children to reach their potential. She is very happy and jubilant in pursuing her studies. Now she thinks about continuing her studies further and proving that education can change the lives of the underprivileged. She expressed her gratitude and thanked PECUC for its support and motivation that brought her to school and helped her in realizing her dreams.

### **From an irregular student to a budding talent...**

Sumit (Fake name), a 10-year-old boy from a remote village in the Patna block of Keonjhar district, live with his parents and four siblings, including two brothers. The family is very poor, and his parents are daily wage earners. They work hard the whole day to manage a family with their uneven income. Many times, the children have to do daily household work as the parents set out to work early in the morning. Sumit was studying in 5th grade but was very irregular in school, as he had to help his parents and take care of his brothers and sisters. Child Club members encouraged and motivated him to come to Shradha Bhawan. When he went there, he was very excited about playing with other children and studying together. Gradually, he developed an interest in studying and other extracurricular group activities. Now he is attending school regularly and showing a keen interest in learning. The parents of Sumit expressed their gratitude and thanked PECUC for their support and motivation, for which Sumit is now dreaming of a good future. However, PECUC is committed to spotting the school left-outs and dropouts and bringing them back to school to provide them with a basic education, which can create awareness and optimism to march forward in life.

### **Asima's (Fake name) Journey: Child labour to formal schooling**

Asima, aged 10 years, was living with her parents in a remote village of Patna block of Keonjhar district. Her parents are daily-wage labourers, with uneven income throughout the year. The family struggles hard to make both ends meet. When the family remained disturbed in the thought of arranging two meals a day, it was hard to talk about school and education. Asima was studying in 4th grade, but she was very irregular in school as she had to look after her younger brother at home when her parents were out of home for work. She also does all the household chores by herself. When CPC members of that village knew about this, they counselled her and persuaded her parents to send Asima to school. She started going to Shradha Bhawan regularly, and there she developed an interest in study and other extracurricular activities. Now she is going to school regularly, and she is very enthusiastic and optimistic about pursuing her studies further. She is being counselled and motivated intermittently by PECUC volunteers to develop sincerity and continue studying so that she could be successful in bringing the family out of poverty. She and her parents thank PECUC for its support and motivation to bring her to school. PECUC believes that education is the key to overcoming the crisis of poverty, gender equality, and human rights.



### **Education a tool of poverty eradication**

PECUC believes that education is the vehicle to help poor families come out of poverty. It aims to equip children with literacy and skills that can enable them to gain employment and bring financial relief to their families.

Sama Munda (Fake name) lives with his parents and two other siblings in Patna block of Keonjhar district. His parents work as daily wage earners with a very unstable income, and it was very difficult on their part to manage their family with the paltry amount they earn. Because of poverty, his parents sent him to other villages to work as Bagalia (looking after cattle) when he was in 6th grade. He became a dropout and left school to work and earn money to add a little to his parents' income. Child Club members of the village took up this issue at the Child Club meeting. The Ward Member, along with Child Club members, went to Sama's house and convinced the family to bring Sama back to his village and put him in the school. His parents agreed, and Sama returned to his village, leaving the work in the neighbouring village. On his return, he joined the Child Club in his village and continued his studies in school. Now he is so happy to attend school and pursue his studies.

It has been the efforts of PECUC to gather the information of dropouts and bring them back to school so that with education and literacy, awareness would enlighten them to get out of poverty.

### **A change for better**

The father of Sanjit Mahanta (Fake name) went to Bengaluru in search of work when he was reading in Class 2. The family was very poor and in utter distress, due to which he could not continue his studies. He remained at home and helped his mother with household work. When his mother got associated with PECUC-supported SHG, she was able to get a loan. With this, she started farming and was able to earn a livelihood. She was encouraged and inspired to allow Sanjit to continue his studies after a gap of one year. He was admitted to class 3rd and attended Sradha Bhawan regularly. Now he is performing well in his studies and shows extra interest in them. His mother gives full credit to PECUC for the change in her fortune and expects that her child will not be compelled to move to far-off places in search of work, leaving his family in the village in distress. The villagers also praise the initiative of PECUC to organize the women and arrange alternate livelihoods for them to enable them to be self reliant. Poverty could be eradicated only through education and skill development, which PECUC proves.

### **Returning to School**

Sithun Munda's (Fake Name) father died 5 years ago. He is living with his mother and a sister. His mother is working as a daily labour to manage their expenses. They are very poor. Sithun used to look after other's livestock to earn some money. He was enrolled at school but did not attend school. When Sradha Bhawan started in their village, volunteers and other project staff convinced his mother to send Sithun to Sradha Bhawan. They discussed with his mother the importance of education and how it is extensively required for a better future for him. His mother finally agreed to



send him to Sradha Bhawan. Shradha Bhawan helped Mithun restart his education, and after some days, he joined school too. Sithun is now studying in 6th grade and performing well in his studies.

#### **The story of KanakBentkar and RamilaBentkar (Fake name)**

Palanghati Panchayat of Patna Block is an undeveloped and impoverished GP in Keonjhar district. A majority of the inhabitants belong to Munda tribe who are not aware of education; hence, they do not prefer to send their children to school rather prefer to engage them in manual work to earn something to add to their income for livelihood. Kanak and Ramila Bentkar of Bentkarsahi of the village were working as daily wage earners in their tender age. Kumari Champabati Mahanta and Mikirani Mahanta, member of our child rights team traced them and informed the CRPC member. By the sincere efforts and counseling of the CRPC, both the girls got admission in the school. Now, they are regular school goers. The teachers have been requested to take little extra care of them to encourage them towards studies.

#### **The story of Jumpa Bentkar (Fake Name)**

Jumpa Bentkar, a 12 years old girl of Palanghati GP, a tribal dominated GP of Patna Block in Keonjhar district was spotted to be a drop out when the villagers were preparing a social mapping along with the child club members, which was called as CEMIS. The village people enumerate the total child population of their village and categorize school going children, AWC children, child labour, drop out through social mapping (CEMIS). Jumpa left her school at the tender age to take care of the cows and goats at home. Both of her parents work as daily wage earners. A little addition in their income was a big thing for them. But Jumpa had a great attraction towards studies. She was coming to the child club meeting and once she expressed her desire to come to school and continue her study. The child club members took interest and counseled her parents about the value of education in future. They made them aware of the acts and laws like the Free Primary compulsory Education offered to the children within the age group of 6-14 years (RTE Act). The village people provided rice from grain bank to her mother and paddy from seed bank to her father. The parents of JumpaBentkar sent her to school and now she is a happy regular school goer. The family was provided with counseling on modern organic farming so that they would not need their daughter's help in earning that extra amount. The family blessed and thanked PECUC and the child club members for taking their dear to school. Her parents are happy to dream that their daughter would earn with dignity.

### **COMMUNITIES FOR KEEPING EXCLUSION AT BAY**

#### **The story of Sunita Maharana (Fake Name)**

The story is about a 13 years old teen who came back to school from field with a smile on her face. She is Sunita, who left school after the demise of her father as it was not possible on part of her mother to support two children. Her elder brother left the school to work but the income was still



insufficient to feed three stomachs. Being desperate, Sunita, began supporting her mother and elder brother in their earning by leaving education. She buried her desire to study further under the acute pressure of poverty. The child rights club members took cognizance and brought her back to school. Now she joined school in class 8th after a series of consultations at community level with her mother and elder brother by the child club and child protection committee. She is happy to be in school again. PECUC is trying to provide support to the family for alternate livelihood so as to spare Sunita for study. She desires to study more and become a teacher so that she could make aware the girls like her to come to school to lead a dignified life.

### **Strong will and can bring change**

Kantiapada is a backward village of Patna block in the district of Keonjhar of Odisha having 3000 population in 316 households. Paddy cultivation is the main occupation and source of earning of the people. The village is composed of 3 different castes/community, i.e. Mahanta, Naik & Munda. Most of the village dwellers are dependent upon the traditional farming. The villagers are all below poverty line and lead a very miserable life with no other means of earning except scouting for work in other villages.

PECUC identified the village and facilitated a Sisusabha uniting all the village children to work for making their village free of social exclusion. On the occasion of the observance of "No Child Labour Day" on 30th April 2012, a village level rally was organized by the Sisusabha members in the village. With different slogans to stop child labour, they moved around the village. During the process, they identified Munu Naik (Fake Name) aged 8 years old, who was grazing village cows and sheep to add a little income of his father to feed the family of six. The Sishu Sabha and CPC committee members counseled his parents. They also interacted with the child and after repeated interaction and meetings, they could convince to bring Munu back to school and admit him in Class-3 after his completion of the bridge course in Sradha Bhawan. Now his parents are happily sending Munu to school as well as to the child club without any hesitation. He became a regular student of class-3, and started attending the child club regularly with his friends. He feels delighted with the hope that he would not have to sell his labour and earn with dignity like a decent man when he grows up.

### **Saved from the shackles of Bonded Labour**

Sabitri Munda (Fake Name) of Kendeipasi GP of Patna block in the district of Keonjhar an eleven year old poor tribal girl was engaged by her parents to graze cattle at the house of one Nakhia Mahanta of nearby village with an annual agreement of Rs. 2000/- as a bonded labour, which led her to discontinue studies in Class III. Her parents had the idea that as Sabitri is the elder daughter of the family, she should have to know the basic household activities and support the family by earning something by working at others house. This would help the family to overcome the financial constraints to some extent. She was continuing her job of bonded labour since last two years. On 31st October, a meeting of Bidyadayini Child Club was organized at Anganwadi Center. The child



club members brought Sabitri to the meeting and explained her the works of the child club. With the invitation of the President, Sabitri agreed gladly to attend the meeting. The members, mostly her friends objected her work as a bonded labour at other village and demanded to readmit Sabitri into the school. Sabitri sobbed and expressed her desire to go to school as she did not like to work in other's house. The President assured her to do the best. Now the Child club and CPC members tried to make her parents understand as they would be losing the income of their daughter. But the club members and CPC members did not lose their hope and carried on their efforts to convince her parents. Ultimately, the couple agreed not to send the child to other village for work. PECUC is now scouting strategy to help the family through alternative livelihood system to raise their income so that they could spare the child for study and say no to bonded labour. Now, change is evident in the face of Sabitri. She hopes to study like her friends and play as per her will. In this hope, she regularly attends the Sishusabha and shares her feelings and aspirations with her friends and peers. It was found that the parents are realizing the fact that education only can stop bonded labour and pave the way for dignified earning.

#### **Mangala's(Fake name) story of happiness**

Dumuria Gram Panchayat under Patana block of Keonjhar district is a tribal dominated GP. Most of the inhabitants belong to the SC, ST & OBC community. The people are mainly dependent on agriculture & daily wages for their livelihood.

PECUC identified and selected the village as most of the people were below poverty line and preferred to send their children to work instead of school. A child club was formed in the village. The children took interest and did wonders. They organized various rallies to create awareness among the community members on child labour and the children's rights. Sishu Sabha members participated in different forums and platforms to fight for the rights of the excluded children. At the time of review of Social Exclusion mapping, the Sishu Sabha members identified one Mangala Munda working as "Bagalia" (local term used for bonded cow care taker). She also performed various other menial household works at her master's house of the same village.

One Saturday, Mangala was beaten mercilessly for a little fault by his father and she was in a horrible state. Her friends and the President of Saraswati Sishu Sabha convened an emergent meeting and decided to intervene. They immediately informed the CPC President and shared all about Mangala. With the help of the CPC president, they met her father and asked a lot of questions. They warned him not to treat child like an animal and informed him about the Child Labour Prohibition Act. They also warned the employer to release Mangala within two days. Mangala got relief. After this event, Mangala expressed her desire to be a member of Sishusabha and go to school. The volunteers helped her in enrolling in the school. That was a unique incident where the children became perturbed and raised their voice against child labour and physically torture the child. Now Mangala feels secured and is gradually gaining confidence that she would



read and not do menial jobs. She has confidence that she has a voice and somewhere some people are there to hear it. We do share this case with other Sishusabhas as a good job done by the children as a story of motivation.

### **The story of Babu Naik (Fake Name)**

Chinamaliposi Gram Panchayat, Patana block of Keonjhar district is composed of SC, ST & OBC Community with dominance of SAUNTI". The peoples largely depend upon agriculture & are daily wages labourers. With the initiative of PECUC, a child club has been formed in the name of Budhia Singh child club in the village. The Club members have organized various rallies to raise awareness among the community members on education. Sishu Sabha members participated in different events at different platforms to raise awareness on the rights of the excluded children. The Sishu Sabha members traced one 13 year old Babua Naik working as a cleaner in a roadside hotel at Dhenkikote market. Apart from cleaning, he was doing various other works of the hotel.

One day Babu was beaten black and blue by the hotel owner for a little mistake. He ran away from the hotel and reached village. He told his misery and requested his friends to save him as his father would force him to go back again to be beaten. His friends requested the President of Budhia Sing Sishu Sabha. The Sishusabha members intimated the case to the President, CRPC. CRPC President with all the members of Sishusabha met the owner of the hotel and asked why he has employed a child as labour and the cause of beating. They warned the hotel owner that he may face serious consequence for employing a child and torturing him. They also asked him to know the Child Labour Prohibition Act and the related punishment. They also warned him not to repeat the offence otherwise they would approach the police for legal action. Babu also got confidence and returned to his friends. The Sishusabha members met Babu's father and convinced him to get his son admitted in school and let him read. Babu is a happy and free boy eagerly attending school regularly.

### **The story of Sasa Bhumija (Fake Name)**

In the Musakhori Gram Panchayat under Patna Block of Keonjhar district, the people depend on agriculture and daily labour for earning their livelihood. A CRPC has been formed with the help of PECUC in this village. The CRPC members own a lot of achievements here. They have participated in different forum and platforms to raise voice for the rights of the excluded children. The child club members identified Sasa Bhumija, a ten year old who was taking care of her younger brother. Sasa was doing all the household chores at her home as her parents worked as daily wage labourers.

The child club members frequently met Sasa and talked about the Child Protection policy, Sradha Bhawan and Child club. They encouraged and persuaded her to participate in the child club meeting. After repeated and continued persuasion, Sasa agreed to come to the meeting. But her parents did not allow her to be a part of the child club. The child club members met the CRPC member and requested Mr Balaram Mahanta, the President of CRPC to bring Sasa to school. The President and other members approached Sasa's parents and tried to bring aware them about the child rights policy, child protection policy, RTE act, etc. After sustained counseling, he agreed to



send the child to school being apprehensive of diminished income. The members linked them in MGNREGS in the village with guarantee of income and enrolled the child in Class-4th at Malliposi Primary School. Her brother also started coming to the nearest Anganwadi centre. She joined school regularly started going to school and their parents expressed thanks and gratitude to PECUC for the help and counseling. They now want their child to study and live a life of dignity.

#### **Samal Majhi's (Fake Name) story of going to school**

Seven year old Samal Majhi, a poor tribal child of Patna block of Keonjhar district was grazing cow as his parents remained out of home in search of daily wage work. Due to poverty, he had no other option but to work as a cow grazer to provide an extra support to the family. But he was very curious about the Sradha Bhawan and keenly watched the activities of children like studying, playing, singing and dancing. PECUC's Multi Purpose Volunteer called him & asked whether he was interested in attending the SB center. He expressed his willingness but showed his apprehension about the consent of his parents. The MPV approached his parents and assured support including mid day meals, dress, books and many other facilities. Our MPV helped in enrolling his name in the primary school. Now he is going to school regularly. The teachers opine that the child is improving and his confidence is growing up every day.

#### **Jasomati's (Fake Name) story of not being a caretaker anymore**

Milu Ventakar is a permanent resident of Patana block of Keonjhar district. He is a daily wage labour having 4 children. He has no agricultural land and solely depends on daily wage to manage the family. His 12 years old daughter Jasomati works as a caretaker of goats of other villagers. By this she could supplement a little to the family income.

She often comes to the Sishu Sabha and quietly listens to the discussions. When asked why she is not joining the children in discussion, she shyly replied that she wants to study but her parents are not allowing her to do so. She has to take care of her siblings and earn something to help her father in supporting the family. The volunteers of the Sishu sabha took the initiative to talk to her parents and motivate them to send her to the school. The teacher of the school also convinced her parents along with the Sishu sabha members and assured them that they need not have to spend a single penny for their child's education and the school would bear all the expenses. The child was enrolled in the school with the initiative of the teacher and club members. Now the child is happy with her books and bag. She tells that the food in the MDM is good and she feels delighted with her friends. She does not like to work. She has started smiling which she had forgotten under the burden of labour and poverty. The Sishu sabha members have requested the Gram Panchayat representatives to extend some help from the Government schemes to her father so that he would not engage his other children in work. Jasomati is an active member of the Sishu sabha now.



### **A springboard to high achievers**

Uday migrated from Ganjam district and settled in a slum in Bapuji Nagar in the heart of Bhubaneswar. His father works in a bicycle repairing shop and the earnings were not sufficient for a family of 8 members. Prabhat (Fake Name), the eldest among the four sons also went with his father to learn and work in the cycle repair shop instead of school to support the family.

PECUC was conducting a child labour mapping with support from Khordha District Labour Department in 2007 and during the process, Prabhat was identified as a child labour. PECUC got him admitted in National Child Labour Project (NCLP) School at Ashok Nagar and mainstreamed him into 6th class in Unit I Boys High School, Bhubaneswar. Prabhat is in touch with education to remain in touch with life. He has a great interest in dance and singing along with his studies. The NCLP School worked as a springboard for him to adopt a meaningful future far away from the prison life led by child labourers. The NCLP School identified and developed the singing talent in him. He has already been recognized as a high achiever in "Bhajan" albums and other stage performances. Prabhat is a changed young man and remembers the horrible days when he had to go to the cycle repair shop for earning just a meager amount in cost of his dreams.

### **A Change in Life**

The 13 years old Dama (Fake Name) is now reading in Class V in Ashok Nagar NCLP School. He is fond of singing, painting and dancing. He has attended many cultural programmes. "I have got the scope to participate at National level programme and have been to Delhi", said Dama with dazzling eyes.

Life was a struggle for him. He lost his parents at the age of 5. Dama is the youngest in the family with 3 sisters and 2 brothers. They were living in the slum in Ashok nagar. His sister was working as a maid servant to manage the home. But it was a tough task to provide food and clothing to the members of the family. So the 7 years old Dama had to come to the street in search of work. He resorted to collect rags and polythenes for two years with an earning of Rs 120/- per month. With this money he managed to buy dresses for himself and also paid the electric bill of the house.

Dama was identified by Mr Santosh and Ms Suprava, both teachers of NCLP and collected all the details. Soon they approached his sister to allow Dama to pursue studies. After sustained persuasion and efforts, Dama got admission into Class IV in the NCLP School. His performance was very good and long with he was also showing brilliance in debate and literature.

### **Story of the excluded child**

Khireitangiree GP is one of the tribal dominated GP of Patna block under Keonjhar district. It is 22 km away from the district head quarter and 23 km away from block head quarter.. The GP is largely dominated by Schedule Caste people. Agriculture is the main occupation of the villagers and some



are engaged in petty businesses and daily wages for their livelihood. Rith Naik, (Fake Name) a daily wage labourer lives in this village with his family of four sons and one daughter. Due to abject poverty, Rith (Fake Name) had already stopped the education of his three sons and daughter and now it was the turn of Ramesh (Fake Name), the younger one. Poverty forced the father to let Ramesh work in a Hotel at Khireitangiree market. He left his studies at class VII. Following the footsteps of his elder brothers and sister, he also started working as a child labourer to add income to his family.

During the process of Social Exclusion Mapping, PECUC identified Ramesh as a child labour who was engaged in hazardous sector and intervened with the Sishu Sabha members at Dalanga. The Sishu Sabha members discussed with Ramesh and persuaded him to join school again. But Ramesh had fear of his father and the hotel owner. The Sishu Sabha members took the initiatives to bring his parents to home time and again, made them aware about the rights of the children. Then the Sishu Sabha members met the hotel owner at Khireitangiree and tried to make him aware of Child Labour Prohibition Act and threatened to inform police. Ultimately, the Hotel owner realized and released Ramesh with one month salary as a blessing. Ramesh was as glad as a free bird.

Sishu Sabha members with a lot of happiness accepted Ramesh as an active member of their Child Club. They also coordinated with the Head Master of Khireitangiree High School and Ramesh got admission in class VIII. Ramesh is now reading in class IX and very happy with his fellow students and his child club friends. "I do like to read. I feel glad when I see my friends with their school bags go to school with a delighted face. But I took it as my fate to clean the utensils and plates of people", he bursts into tears. Now, he is an active member of the Sishu Sabha and believes that no child should be out of school. Our future should not be destroyed with a paltry earning. Ramesh is of the view that education is the key to overcome child labour.

#### **Somesh (Fake Name) fought out his way to light**

The tribes have a tradition of strong social defense system in place to protect children who have lost their parents and in need of care and protection. The child was immediately and instantly adopted by his/her nearest relatives or the kinsman. But time and tide has made people socially and economically vulnerable. They are unable to continue the practice due to poverty at home. Institutional support is required to bridge the gaps and to ascertain the best interest of the child. The following is an effort to that end.

A cluster of tribal houses are located in a cut off area in Diani hamlet of Patna Block, and separated by patches of deep and dense forest. People have to traverse through the rough and tough road to fetch water from the tube well located in the main village. An ICDS centre and a primary school are the only institutional facilities in the village. The ward member, ASHA and AWW are from the main village.



With every day break, Somesh is found with a herd of cows on his way to the jungle. He used to return home at sunset. At times he was accompanied by his two younger siblings. Somesh is in the profession for last one year until he was identified as a "Bagalia" by the MPV in the month of October in 2012.

The story of Somesh and his two younger siblings is soaked with compassion and pity. Somesh and his younger sibling are orphans. His father died in 2002 and his mother eloped in 2007. Somesh and two of his younger siblings were staying with their paternal uncle. His poor guardians could not afford the pressure of 3 children and they decided to send Somesh as bagalia to reduce the pressure on household economy. Somesh was asked to take care of the goats. In the course of time, he dropped out from school to begin his new life as a child labour in the profession of a bagalia.

He was identified as a bagalia, the MPV went to his house and tried to sensitise the guardians to send the children to SB centre. Initially, the guardians did not respond positively. Afterwards they were agreed when the local PRI member came to the rescue of the child.

On a bright sunny morning, when all the villagers were on their way to earn their bread for the day, a child with a school bag on his back was found holding the hands of one of his two younger siblings and walking down the street on his way to the SB center. Later on, three children were mainstreamed in to the formal education system. All the three children are getting the benefit of school uniforms, study books free of cost from the school in addition to the School MDM on week days. In this way, a social defense was created and lives of three most vulnerable children in the remote pockets of Patana block were settled in their best interest.

#### **Ranjit Kumar Mohanta (Fake Name) has a new dream now**

Eight years old Rabjit Mohanta of Patna block is one among the four children of a daily wage labourer couple. His family was finding it difficult to feed their children due to financial crisis as his parents could not find work on daily basis. The family was leading a miserable life in acute poverty. Rabjit was reading in the U.G.U.P. School but was forced to discontinue in class 2 and set out to work. He was engaged in the work of cow herding. His name was in class 2 in the School but he discontinued his study since 4 months and became a child labourer to support his family. The MPV of PECUC took cognizance of the case and discussed with the CRPC members. Bhagabati Mohanta, MPV started counseling his parents, convinced them and made them understand the importance of education by sharing the govt. provisions and facilities under Right to Education Act – 2009. The parents finally understood and decided to send him to school again. The boy is now a regular school goer. He is happy in the school and with his friends. He and his parents have decided to continue his study as per their capability. Their smiling face is the only asset of PECUC. Our volunteers have vowed to achieve a complete abolition of child labour and cent percent admission of every child in the school.



Lekha Munda, a ten years old girl of Patna block resorted to household works discontinuing her studies in class 4, as poverty forced her to leave school and dragged her to physical work. Her father was a daily labourer. She has 3 sisters and 2 brothers. As a part of the intervention of PECUC, a Sradha Bhawan was set up in the village. PECUC volunteers encouraged her to come to Sradha Bhawan center & attend the Sisusabha. She was very amused and regularly attended the centre and came to Sishu sabha every Saturday. Rasmirekha Modi, Secretary, Narimahal Sisusabha counseled her parents to readmit her in class 4th. With their efforts and endeavour, she got admitted in class four in Gandabeda Ashram School which is a residential School situated near Dhekikote, 15 km away from Ghatbalijodi. Lekha is staying there and her parents are visiting her once in a fort night. She emotionally tells that sometimes she misses her parents however, she is happy with her friends in the school. She enjoys study with fun and dreams to be a teacher.

#### **Hema Mahanta's (Fake Name) story of getting new hopes**

Hema, daughter of Sumanta Mahanta, of Patna block of Keonjhar district is a student of class V. Her father is a truck driver and did not bother to send the child to school, rather engaged Hema in household activity, when her mother was in search of daily wage work. She became depressed remembering her friends in the schools. Sisusabha members met her father and informed various plans and schemes of the Govt. towards the education of children. They repeatedly requested her father to allow Hema to attend the school. Her father ultimately agreed to send his angel to school. Now, Hema is coming to school regularly. She is a jolly girl, good in reading, writing, playing, and other co-curricular activities. She is not only a student of the school but has also been elected as the President of Sisusabha. She understands her role perfectly and is very happy with the works of Sisusabha members as well as her teachers. She was rescued at perfect time and got a new life. PECUC has planned improvement of learning level, development of leadership quality, debating ability, develop her creativity, reading habits and organizing capacity of these bright children and to make them achieve their goal as per their ability. PECUC will be supporting Hema till her matriculation and further guide her to choose a better career. Gunanidhi Behera, Head Master says that Hema got a new life due to the intervention of Sisusabha members and PECUC volunteers. She is a bright child and can do wonders if guided properly. Hema's father has understood his mistakes. He says proudly that he would not let her daughter remain half educated. He would try his best to give his daughter higher education. Hema says, "I am very happy with good steps of my friends and my teachers"

#### **Banidhar Majhi (Fake Name) – on his way to achieve the unachievable**

Mushakhori GP of Patna block, district Keonjhar is surrounded by the deep and green lush forest cover. The people of the village mainly depend upon agriculture for their livelihood. But, they do not possess enough land to do farming in a better way. Hence, they resort to work as daily labourers to maintain their family. People are heavily dependent upon forest for sustaining their



livelihood. They are mostly engaged in collecting kendu leaves, fruits, root mushroom, Sal leaves and stick (used as tooth brush).

Banidhar lives with his parents. His parents work as daily labourers to meet the need of the family. But the monthly income of the family was not sufficient to have two times full meal a day and to lead a contended life. The family members thought about engaging Banidhar (their son) in labour too. Though Banidhar did not want to discontinue his study but was compelled to do so and he finally dropped out in class 6 and was engaged as a bagalia in one's house in the village who paid his parents a sum of Rs 500 in a year. Sometimes the owner even makes late in paying the money. Banidhar was identified by the members of Child club of the village. Then the child club members informed about it to the members of Child Protection Committee of the village. The Child Protection Committee members along with the child club members met Banidhar and shared the steps they have taken for continuation of his study. They urged his father to let Banidhar attend the school. He was brought to the Sradha Bhawan. After 6 months, the volunteers along with the members of CPC enrolled him in class 7. Now he is continuing his study in class 10th. He is confident of passing the Board examination with flying colours and pursue higher study. He has a dream to go for police service to work for the underprivileged children like him. PECUC facilitated his parent's jobs under Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme so that the family need not worry for an extra income of his underage son.

#### **Jibanta (Fake Name) on his trail to save the nation, while we save him from labour**

Jibanta, hails from a poor and illiterate family of Badapatna Panchayat of Patna Block, where most of the villagers depend upon agriculture for their livelihood. The father of Jibanta works as a daily wage labour. His earning was insufficient to maintain the family. The financial constraints of the family forced Jibanta to work as Bagalia in his village which brought his education to an end. He dropped out of school at class 8. Maintenance of family was the first priority of his parents rather than education. The master took him under bond of Rs. 500 per year to his parents as wage. Later, he started working in a grocery shop in Patna market. Jibanta was first spotted by the volunteers of PECUC. Then the volunteers of PECUC along with the Child Protection Committee members approached his parents to send Jibanta to school. But his parents denied as he was a good helping hand for them. The Sishusabha members played an influential role in persuading his father to let him attend school and stop him from working as a helper in the grocery shop. After continuous discussion with his parents he was enrolled in Sradha Bhawan. One month later after completion of bridge course, he was enrolled in class 9. Now he is continuing his study in +3 in Anchalika Mahavidyalaya, Patna. He is confident that after graduation, he would join Indian Army to serve the nation.



### **Sunita (Fake Name) dreams of being a nurse**

The people of Badapatna Panchayat in Patna block of Keonjhar district are basically into agriculture for earning their livelihood. Sunita Karua lives with her parents and 4 siblings in this GP. Her father is a landless daily wage earner. The family leads a miserable life as wage is not available all days. The income of her father was not sufficient to maintain the family. The family decided to engage their daughter Sunita in work bringing her education to an end despite of her keen interest in study. She had to discontinue her study and dropped out in class 4. Her mother engaged her as a domestic help in her neighbourhood where she was cleaning the utensils, sweeping the house and washing clothes, etc. They paid Rs 100/150 per month to her mother. The CPC members spotted her while working. With the help of the volunteers of PECUC, the child club members and the CPC members could be able to convince her parents.

Sunita was enrolled in Sradha Bhawan. After three months of bridge course, she was admitted in class 5 in school. Now she is studying in +2 in Patna. She desires to study Nursing course and serve the poor people. It is quite clear in the case of Sunita that if appropriate environment is created by sincere efforts, education can change the child labour scenario and the vicious circle of poverty can be broken.

### **Shantipriya (Fake Name) changed her fate**

Shantipriya, daughter of a landless daily labourer and eldest among 3 sisters of Badapatna Panchayat, Patna block, Keonjhar district left her study at class IV due to acute poverty and did domestic works in the neighbouring families to earn Rs 150/- per month and a dress once in a year. Shantipriya made compromise with the situation accepting it as her unsaid fate.

The child club members of her village identified her and informed about it to the Child Protection Committee members. Along with the CPC members they visited her house and talked to her parents. At first her parents were not interested in her studies as she was a source of income to maintain the family. But ultimately they agreed after continuous counselling by the CPC members and child club members. She was admitted in Sradha Bhawan. After six months bridge course, she was enrolled in class 5. Her mother got the Job of ASHA and her father started a little betel shop. Time is the witness of the developments. Shantipriya continued her study in +3 1st years in Patna as well as enrolled herself in computer education with a dream to be successful in life.

### **Hari (Fake Name) fought social exclusion to reach where he is now**

Hari Munda lives with his family at Swam Patna Block of Keonjhar district. He has one younger brother and younger sister. His father is a bagalia and takes care of others domestic animals. His mother works as an agricultural daily wage laborer. Hari witnessed pains and agonies of poverty and social exclusion from his early childhood. He left studies in class III and went to work on wage in agricultural fields. From dawn to dusk he worked and provided financial support to his family



members. His childhood was cursed with responsibilities and he lost all hopes for further studies. He led his childhood as a child labour for a long time.

After a few years, things started to change when Child Protection Committee was formed by PECUC in the village. The CPC members visited his home, interacted with him, did assessment of current situation of the family and conducted specific counseling on future studies. Hari was convinced and decided to step ahead for future studies but his father objected to his studies and directed him to focus his concentration for manual labor to support his family. This critical situation was handled by Child Protection Committee by convincing to his father. After a comprehensive and series of conversation his father decided to enroll his name in school. Hari got the enrollment as per his age. He was convinced that he could get plethora of chances to earn with honour and dignity, if he gets education. He is currently pursuing higher education at Dumuria College and enjoying joy of learning with his new friends.

#### **School life comes again for Baman Majhi (Fake Name)**

Bamana Majhi is very happy and comfortable when he got back to his school again. Since two years back he left his studies at the age of 11 because of poverty and misery of his family. His father left them when he was only 8 leaving 4 members including his sister, elder brother and mother. All the family responsibility came upon him. So he started working as a cow care taker at his grandfather's house. The amount of money earned by him was utilized by his family. For which he had to leave his education and engaged himself in different detrimental activities with mischievous friends.

The Child club members became aware of his bad company and discussed this issue with his mother and elder brother. During interaction, his elder brother shared about the family problems including non-linkage of the family with any Government schemes and projects and for survival, they had to send Bamana for work. The Sisusabha members shared the issue with the CPC members and both the institutions joined hand to bring back Bamana to his native village and his family. So the CPC facilitated to avail Scheme i.e. Annapurna Scheme, get job under job card, enroll her Sister at ICDS etc. All these support and help to Bamana's family to survive without engaging Bamana in any labour force. After availing all these facilities his family was convinced and with support of CPC they could convince his grandparents too. Bamana came back to his home and was enrolled in School as per RTE.

In Bamana's word:

"I am feeling happy and I have promised that I will counsel to these children who are not coming to school regularly and will counsel to parents who are sending their child to work in different sector in their school going age."



### **Saroj's (Fake Name) journey from Hotel to School**

Patna is the most backward block in Keonjhar district. Under Patna block Khireitangire GP is one of the most populated GP consisting of 5 villages among which Khireitangire is one of the biggest and most populated villages situated by the side of NH-6. Total households are 449, & population 2508. The villagers mainly depend on agriculture and daily labour for their livelihood.

The Govt. facilities available in this village are not sufficient due to over population. Still then Govt. has facilitated primary education for the children. But due to extreme poverty, some children are forced to discontinue studies and work for their family to earn some money to supplement the family income.

Saroj Mohanta is one among the excluded children in Khireitangire GP. His father died in an accident leaving his wife and two children in distress and the incident jolted the family severely. Her mother supported them for few months working as daily labour. But the situation became worse when his mother became bed ridden due to illness and could not work for the sustenance of the family. It became impossible to arrange two meals a day. In this situation, Saroj chose to work in a hotel in Khireitangire market and her sister worked as a domestic labour keeping aside their studies.

Saroj's case came up in a regular process of Child Protection Committee (CPC) meeting and the members met their mother. They facilitated the treatment of Saroj's mother and she got cured. When CPC asked his mother about Saroj's education she described about their financial problem, however showed interest in the proposal. The CPC arranged a residential school for the education of Saroj. Now Saroj is very happy with his friends. He has realized that without education, he cannot come out of poverty and cannot lead a life of dignity. He expects that he would lead a decent life and takes best care of his mother and sister. He also hopes that his sister would read and bring good name to her mother.

### **Successful intervention puts Suranjan (Fake Name) in school**

Badapatana Panchayata in Patana block of Kendujhar district in Odisha, India presents a dismal picture of deprivation and poverty of the disadvantaged and marginalized communities in the state. Situated on the side of block Headquarters, on one side and surrounded by large expanses of undulated fallow land on the other side, has little option for agriculture or other rural based livelihoods. Life under the circumstances depends mostly on the limited livelihood options available in the neighbouring Patana Township. The widow mother of 15 year old Suranjan was desperate to fill the stomach of her 7 children. The elder brothers of Suranjan were already out of school and joined the labour force along with their working mother. Suranjan had to stay at home to look after his younger siblings and to take care of the goats, the only assets of the family. He was sure to abandon studies at Class V to take care of the family. But watching other children attending school



was a sight of pain and distress for the young Suranjan which he could not able to digest. By joining goat rearing, the child was in the preparatory stage to take up bigger burden of labour work for the family. But he was intervened in time when the CRPC member came to know about his long absence in the school. The effort of CRPC members' got success when Suranjan's mother agrees to send him to school. Years have elapsed ever since Suranjan was readmitted in the school with the support of CRPC members. Suranjan took 4 successive years in school to complete elementary level of learning to join 9th Class in High School in the neighbouring village. During this period, no further drop out taken place in his family. The children and parents of his community have developed awareness to continue education to lead a life of dignity.

#### **Sumati (Fake Name) is in school now**

Sumati lives with her parents in Patna block of Keonjhar district. Instead of bringing her up to school, her parents engaged her in performing the domestic works as her parents are daily labourers and had to go for agricultural field daily. Sumati was disgusted with this, she dreams for the school life but her dreams would never coming true she thought. She discontinued her studies from class VII and was engaged in domestic work in family and taking care of domestic animals like cows, sheep and bullocks. On the other hand her parents were engaged in the field for daily labour.

As Sumati is a member of child club, her absence in child club meeting made others apprehensive that Sumati was involved in cattle rearing and domestic work instead of studying. This was all due to the lack of awareness on education of her parents. Initially it was difficult for them to motivate the parents of Sumati, who were more interested in seeing their daughter earn rather than go to school and study. Time flew by, and on the due course of time and after 3 months one day she met with the school teacher while grazing cows at the road side. He asked her about her discontinuity of school and she answered that her parents were reluctant to send her to the school as she was going to grow up and was engaged in cooking and housekeeping activities. This situation of Sumati was shared to Mr Parsuram Puhan, Field Education worker of PECUC who assures him for sustainable step by any mean.

The PECUC officials as well as the members Child Club requested the parents of Sumati for not spoiling the career of their child. The parents were convinced to send Sumati to school to continue her study for a better future. On the hand the child club members motivated their friend Sumati to enroll her name in the school. At last as per RTE norm Sumati's name was re-enrolled in the class VIII at Haladharapur Govt. High School.

She says, "My teachers and friends are very cooperative and they all tried their level best to reconcile my education again".



### **Rebati (Fake name) fulfills her long cherished dream of going to school**

Seven years old Rebati, daughter of Sumanta Munda (Fake Name), a poor daily labourer was engaged as a bonded labour on monthly payment to a neighbouring villager due to an urgent need of money for the funeral ceremony of her mother. Rebati was very much shocked at her mother's immature and sudden death. The little girl became excluded from education before she could come to know what the life is all about. She was no longer identifiable among the other children in the village. She had a beautiful dream for being educated but her situation put a full stop on it.

Though there are Sishu Sabhas in all project schools formed for increasing attendance, enrolment, retention and enhancing learning level of the students, still many become victims under the pressure of poverty. The members of Neheru Sishu Sabha traced Rebati working as domestic aid, as they did not find her in the school for a long time. They tried their best for mainstreaming Rebati to formal education.

Once, during a Sisusabha follow up meeting, the members of Neheru Sisusabha of this village raised these issues in their meeting and informed our concern Field Education Worker. It was decided that our Field Education Worker would meet the concerned person who kept Rebati as child labour as well as to meet her father regarding her schooling. The leaders of the Sisusabha took responsibility to meet Rebati and would counsel her to come to come school.

They were finally able to convince the person who kept Rebati in her house and he agreed to make her free from this trap. But her father initially was not interested to send his child to school except earning something. Finally he understood the situation and felt very much guilty for not providing education to her children.

The Sisusabha members also counseled Rebati to come to school. Rebati agreed and could visualize her long cherished schooling and ready to attend her class. She was admitted in class 2nd on 21st July, 2012.

Rebati and her father have become aware of the necessity of her education and future. She will complete her primary and elementary education from this school which must be beneficial in her future.

The Sisusabha member and teachers of the school are aware of their moral duty towards continuation of Rebati's schooling. They are cooperating in her learning and giving special attention to bridge up the learning gap as per the class. "I like reading and enjoy study and play with friends. I do not want to work in other's house. Sishu sabha member friends saved me." Rebati said when she first attended her class in the school.

**Ramnath Majhi (Fake Name)** hails from Patna block, district Keonjhar. His parents are daily wage labourers. But as their combined income was not enough to provide two meals a day and meet the



requirements of the family. Ramnath was pushed into becoming a labourer while he was studying in class 6th. Although he did not want to discontinue his study but being pressurised he had to migrate to a nearby block to work in a brick kiln unit. The members of the Child Protection Committee along with members of Sishusabha promoted by PECUC motivated his family members and rescued Ramnath & got him admitted into Sradha Bhawan, the Child Rights Resource Center cum motivation center run by PECUC in the village. After six months, Ramnath was enrolled in Class 7th. He cleared the Class X examination during 2018 and then continued his studies in the nearby college. He says, "After completing my education I want to join Indian Police Service".

**Sonali**, (Fake Name) a drop out in Class 6th was working as a domestic labourer with a monthly wage of Rs. 200 per month. The village level Child Protection Committee promoted by PECUC helped her to get back home and also got her admitted in Sradha Bhawan, child motivation centre run by PECUC. After three months, she was enrolled in Kasturba Gandhi Valika Bidyalaya at Batapandugandi village at Jashipur. She has completed Class 7th and enrolled in Class 8 at Rairia Govt. Girls High School at Saharpada block of Keonjhar district where she cleared the Class X examination. Sonali is now continuing her education in Swampatana. She says, "Continuing my studies and appearing for the 10th examination is like getting a basket full of happiness. After completing my education I will become a social worker to motivate, educate and make the people of my community aware about the importance of educating the girl child".

There are many such victims and vulnerable children rescued and brought back to school by PECUC's intervention and enjoyed their lost childhood.

**When there is a will there is a way**

**Suanra Majhi (Fake Name) – Back to School**

The people of Mushakhori Panchayat are mostly dependent upon agriculture for their livelihood. The landless people work as daily labour. Aansa Majhi (Fake Name), father of Suanra Majhi works as daily labour to maintain his family. Despite of lot of trouble he never discontinued the education of his children. Eldest two children are studying in colleges and the younger one Suanra was studying in class 9.

Suanra Majhi discontinued his studies in class 7 and started roaming like a vagabond. The child club members spotted him. With the help of the CPC member they visited Suanra's house. His parents told that he never stays in the house wandering hither and thither and sometimes works as a bagalia for small amount of money. "We have tried several times to stop him but all our efforts failed", says his father. The child club members and the CPC members counselled him about the importance and utility of education. After continuous visit and counseling, he agreed to come to Sradha Bhawan. Gradually he got adjusted and participated in child club. Slowly and gradually he mixed up with other friends and became a part of the Sradha Bhawan. He also joined camp for



children where he interacted with other children of different villages and got knowledge and idea about the importance of education. After returning from the camp, he started going to school.

#### **Life has a lot of good in account for Babuli (Fake name)**

Babuli Nath, aged about 11 years of Bhograi block of Balasore district belongs to OBC category and reading in class five. His mother had love marriage when she was working at Soro in a hatchery. Babuli came to their lap after two years of marriage. But misfortune was waiting for this happy and small family. His father was detected with cancer and the disease snatched the father from his only son. After the tragedy his mother along with Babuli returned to their village and stayed in the neighbour's house. His father's family did not accept the mother and son because of their love marriage. So, his mother decided to keep Babuli in neighbour's house and go to Madhya Pradesh with a known person of the village. Finally his mother with a written paper handed over Babuli to Jayanti Mandal to take care of her son and left the village for Madhya Pradesh to earn money to build Babuli's future. But, her mother later remarried there with the man she had gone for work abandoning Babuli.

Babuli grew up at the neighbor's house under the foster care of Laxmikant Mandal and Jaynti Mandal. When he was five years, he was enrolled in class one in Dwaripatra Primary School under Gopinathpur Panchayat. While he was studying in class five at the age of 11 years his foster care mother became paralysed and could not be able to earn money to maintain the family. To help the family Babuli left the school and became potential child labour. Babuli was begging and selling brooms in the local market of Bhograi in 2015.

During the field visit of staff of PECUC, the volunteers spotted Babuli and decided to bring the boy to school. They counseled him and his foster parents. In consultation with VCPC members he was enlisted in support to drop out children and supported him with learning materials. In continuous counseling by staff to the family members and consult with concerned school teachers, Babuli was again readmitted in the class five at Primary School Dwaripatra in November 2015 and arranged a job card for his foster father. Babuli realized that only education can provide him a better option and opportunity in the future. He left begging and devoted his time in studies. In the Sundays only, he goes to the market for selling broom to support the family.

The family and neighbours have expressed their sincere gratitude to PECUC for the positive and benevolent work of saving a child from begging and proving opportunity to pursue his education.

#### **Madhu (Fake Name) finally realized what education meant to him**

Seventeen year old Madhu Behera belongs to SC family of Nachinda Panchayat under Bhograi block in the district of Balasore. His father is a landless daily laborer. He was working with a fish merchant and used to go to deep sea for fishing in his master's launch. Due to poverty of his family he left the college while he was studying in +2 Arts. With friends of his village Madhu left village for



Hyderabad to work in a Bakery. His friend promised him to get Rs.6800/- per month along with food and accommodation. So he left for Hyderabad with his friend to Hyderabad in 2015. But at Hyderabad, he could be engaged in the bakery with a monthly wage of Rs 6000/- and he had to stay in an unhygienic condition. So he fell sick quite often. His health started deteriorating and the bakery owner did not pay any attention to him. So with the help of his friends he left the job and returned to his native village in the year 2016 after a year of hard labour in Hyderabad.

His family members were worried about his health and got him admitted in the Government Hospital at Balasore. He was diagnosed with gastroenteritis. After prolonged treatment, he got cured. With the support of PECUC, he passed his Intermediate course and tried getting admission into the CT course. His experience as a migrant labour is horrific and expressed his gratitude to PECUC for its noble help and assistance to appear the Intermediate examination and adequate counselling to get back to right track.

#### **Saroj Bej (Fake name) returned to village to continue his education**

Saroj Bej, aged about 15 years of Rasalpur G.P. of Bhograi block belongs to OBC and BPL category family. He belongs to a landless family and his father is a daily laborer and sometimes his father used to go to sea to catch fish in others boat on wage basis. He has one brother and two sisters. He has completed 9th class of education at the age of 15 years.

Like other days while he was in tuition, Saroj left the village with his friends for Chennai without any intimation to his family. Saroj found a cleaner job in a Hotel in Chennai with the help of his friend's father. Saroj's family members became so worry not to find him. Two days later he informed to his family about his presence in Chennai. Saroj was engaged in the Hotel as a cleaner for Rs.3000/- per month. But the hotel work was very difficult for Saroj and he decided to leave the work and come back to village. Now family members of Saroj started pressurizing to his friend's father to send him back to the village because after some days school would reopen. So his family is much interested to reintegrate Saroj in Class 10. His family member sent ticket for Saroj to come back and again study in class 10th. The real picture came to light when Saroj returned to the village. PECUC facilitated him to clear the Board examination. He sighs when he remembers the horrific time at Chennai. Now Saroj is planning to go to college.

#### **Continuous and coordinated effort streamlined Sima's (Fake Name) life**

Sima Munda, a 10 years old girl lives in one of the most remote and backward villages of Keonjhar district of Odisha. When she was only 2 years old her mother passed away and father migrated to out of the state for work leaving her with his younger brother. Since last 8 years, there is no information of her father.

She started living under the care of her uncle and aunt. Sima grew up and got enrolled in the nearby school of the village. At that time she was going to school regularly and also doing well. But as per the direction of her aunt, she discontinued education and did all the household works.



During the frequent intervention of our project, Dasharatha Mohanta, Field Education Worker, Ghatagan Zone traced her and tried to motivate her uncle and aunt to send her to school. He tried his best and became successful to motivate her guardians, School teacher and her classmates through different means; as a result his coordinated and continuous effort became successful. Now Sima is coming to school regularly and reads in class – II as well as doing well in her study. It may be one of the mere cases for our society but it demands attraction as great example for the deprived children as well as our system of education.

### **Is it a challenge for admitting a dropped-out child in age-appropriate class?**

Eleven years old Babul (Fake name) of Tangarpada discontinued his studies from class III in the year 2009. One day the members of Saraswati Sishu Sabha requested Babul to attend the child club meeting. At first he was reluctant to attend the meeting as he had already left school since last two years. The Child club members brought this matter to the notice of Mr. Nihar Ranjan Uttaray, Field Education Worker (FEW). Being informed by the children, Mr. Nihar suggested him to attend the meeting at least for that very day i.e. on 3rd December 2011. Babul could not avoid the advice of Mr. Nihar for attending the meeting. On that very day Antakshyari and song competition was organized for an hour. After that the importance of education was discussed by the FEW through question-cum-answer method. After the end of the meeting, the FEW immediately went to the family of the child and inquired why he is not going to the school. In reply, he said that his father engaged him in household works. When his father was asked about the discontinuation of Babul's study, he replied that he is engaged in share-cropping and sometimes he works as a cowherder in order to earn the livelihood of the family as the family comprises of seven members (two brothers, three sisters and parents). Again he was motivated to send his ward to school as education plays a vital role for shaping the future of his son. On the other hand, the child club members motivated their friend Babul to come back to school. Both the parents and child were motivated. The FEW along with Nandu met the Headmaster of the school for admitting the child in school in age appropriate class. But it is a matter of surprise that his name was already registered in 5th class. From 12th December onwards Babul has been regularly attending the school. It is undoubtedly a great challenge for Babul to go with the curriculum of 5th class as he left school from 3rd class. In order to overcome this problem, one of the ex-volunteers of PECUC took the responsibility for imparting special coaching to the child for compensating his learning gap. Besides this, the FEW of EIBP Project also did spend three hours per a week for the purpose of imparting teaching to the child beyond the school.

### **I will never discontinue my studies, says Sanjit Munda (Fake name)**

"In the year 2010, I was studying in class-VI in Suakathi Sevashram School. In one summer, I came to my village in order to spend my holidays. During these days I engaged myself in playing with my friends from dawn to dusk. Even I never mind that I was continuing my education. By then I developed a negative attitude towards my studies. I never wanted to miss my native friends at any cost. Hence, I was not willing to attend my classes in Suakathi Sevashram School. As a matter of fact I discontinued my studies. After some days I did not like to spend my time by playing only. On the other hand, the socio-economic condition of my family compelled me to earn my livelihood. Being undone, sometimes I used to go with a tractor driver for the sake of some earning."



The Sisusabha members of that village were watching his activities and they brought it to the notice of Child Rights Protection committee (CRPC). Being convinced by the Sisusabha members, CRPC members visited the family of Sanjit and motivated the father of Sanjit to send his ward to their village school. Mitu went to Seva Shram School in order to bring the school leaving certificate and he obtained it from the school. After this, he admitted his ward in Murusuan Primary school in the year 2012. "Now I enjoy my studies here. I do commit that I will never quit my studies under any circumstances," He said. This is the version of Mitu Munda, a tribal boy. He has realised that a decent living is possible only through education. He has vowed to go to college at any cost.

### **Back to track again- Somu Munda**

Twelve years old Somu Munda, was continuing his primary education in Bhubaneswar residing with his uncle's family as his father was very poor to send his child to school. Instead of bringing him up, his uncle engaged him in performing the domestic works. Somu was disgusted with this. In summer vacation Somu came to his native place but he was reluctant to go back to Bhubaneswar and discontinued his studies from class III in the year of 2008. On the other hand, his father engaged him in doing some works for earning the bread and butter for the family.

One day the member of Saraswati Sisusabha of Tangarapada found him in the village while he was grazing the cattle. The child club members suggested Somu to attend the child club meeting. At first he was unwilling to attend the meeting as he had already left the school for last 3 years. The Child club members brought the matter to the notice of Field Education Worker, PECUC. The Field Education Worker advised him to attend the meeting at least for that day. As per the advice, he attended the child club meeting on 17th December 2011. On that day it was planned to organize Song, debate, drawing and Quiz competitions for an hour. After that the importance of education was discussed by the Field Education Worker. After the meeting, the Field Education Worker along with the Sisusabha members immediately went to the Family of this child and met with the parents and came to know about the reasons of drop-out.

The Field Education Worker as well as the members of the Child Club requested the parents of Somu for not spoiling the career of their ward.

The parents were motivated and persuaded to send their child for shaping his future. On the other hand the child club members motivated their friend Somu to enroll his name in the school. At last as per RTE norm Somu's name was enrolled in class VI at the village Nodal UGUP School. Now Somu is attending the school regularly. He says my teachers and friends are very cooperative and they all tried their level best to compensate his learning level.

### **MadhabMoharana (Fake Name) -Disability never stopped him to go to school**

MadhabMoharana, a 12 yearsold boy of Paidapatna GP is a child with special needs, i.e. hearing impaired (HI). He is the only son of his parents. His father has to depend on the daily labour wage as



the financial condition of the family is not good. Both the parents had interest to provide education to their only son Madhab. In this situation Madhab completed class-6 from Nusuriposi UGUP School during the academic session 2010-11.

In the mean time, Sri Kailash Chandra Sahoo, the Chairman of Gurukula School of Science and Rehabilitation, of Gadadharpur village under Ghatagaon Block (22 km away from the village of Madhab) came to know about the problem of Madhab (CWSN-HI) from the Block Resource Teacher. He reached Nusuriposi UGUP School and met the then Head Master Sri Narayan Nayak and assured him that if Madhab will be admitted in his school (Gurukula School of Science and Rehabilitation) he would get free accommodation, text book, food, stipend, school uniform, hearing kit etc.

The HM informed Madhab and his parents about their interest and consent. The family members as well as Sadanada decided to take TC from the school to get admission in Gurukula School of Science and Rehabilitation. With the written consent of Madhab and his Parents, the Head Master gave him Transfer Certificate (TC) in the month of April 2011.

Then Madhab along with his father went to Gurukula School of Science and Rehabilitation and met the Chairman and discussed with him that they were coming for the admission of Madhab in the school as CWSN-HI. The chairman asked for the certificate of disability. But they did not have the certificate and for the reason denied admission. However being desperate, Madhab left his studies. The matter came to the notice of CRPC. The CRPC members met Madhab and came to know that in spite of their best efforts, they are not getting the certificate of disability. We advised them to continue his study in Nusuriposi UGUP School. But he had already lost 4 months of study. We assured him to help him in getting the hearing impaired certificate and till that time he should continue his study. The HM of Nusuriposi UGUP School was kind enough to readmit him in the school so that the child could continue his study in that school till he got his disability certificate. Finally Madhab along with his parents agreed to continue his study. On 21 July he got readmission in the school and continued his study.

#### **Soma Tahala (Fake Name) gets into school on time**

SomaTahala belongs to the Kargil slum under Ward number 62 of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation, which is one of the crowded slums in the city. The occupation of the community people of the slum are mason, daily wage labour, street food vendors and working as domestic helps. SomaTahala was living in the slum with her parents and one sister. Her father is a daily labour and presently he is working as a care taker in a shop. Her mother is working as a house maid. The income of both of her parents was not sufficient to meet the daily needs of the four membered family. Every day Soma's father was struggling to get work. Under this circumstance, she was forced by her parents to stop attending school when she was in class 5th. Her mother asked her to support the family income by working as a household maid. During 2013 she was identified by the staff members of PECUC with support of the community people and she was enrolled in the NCLP School, where she continued her study for one year. Then she was enrolled in Bhimatangi Primary



school. After completing her primary education now she is continuing her High School. She is attending her School regularly with interest and she is very good in studies as per her teachers. Her parents are also happy with her performance. She wanted to be a Doctor and would serve for the community, for the poor needy people especially staying in slum areas in an unhygienic condition.

#### **Sibananth's (Fake name) determination to study became his weapon against child labour**

Sibananth Behera lives with his parents in the slum of BMC area. His father is a mason by profession and his mother is a house maid. Being a daily labourer, his father was getting Rs 300 per day. His mother was getting Rs 2250 per month working in three houses. But both of their income was not sufficient for leading a happy and tension free life. So, when Sibananth was in class 3 he was asked to discontinue his education and support his father as a supporting hand. With the support of his friends he could know about the NCLP School. Then with support of the NCLP School teachers he got admission in the NCLP School during 2013. He attended the school regularly and enjoyed the joyful education and got motivated towards education. Then he was enrolled in Bhimtangi Primary School and his parents also supported him to continue his Education. Now Sibananth is reading in class 8th at Bhimtangi High School. He is enjoying his education and planning to be a teacher.

#### **Sabitri Boral dreams of fulfilling the dreams of children like her**

Sabitri has been living with her parents and siblings at Kargil slum, Bhubaneswar. Her father sellsgolgappa and her mother is a house maid. When Sabitri was in class 2 she was asked by her parents to stop attending school and to go with her mother to different houses to support her during washing clothes and utensils. During 2010 when the NCLP school started its operation, Sabitri used to come during the lunch time and used to spend good time with her friends. This was noticed by the NCLP School teacher and one day she asked Sabitri to attend NCLP whenever she is free rather than only coming during lunch. Afterwards, Sabitri started attending the NCLP School regularly during her leisure time. Then one day all the project school team being together visited Sabitri's home and discussed with her parents to send Sabitri to NCLP School regularly full time and stop her to work further. After regular visit and interaction with her parents, Sabitri got scope to attend NCLP School. She studied in the school and completed class 4. During 2011, she got admission in Bhimtangi Primary School in class 4th. She was one of the good students of her school and continuing her education. Presently, she is studying in +2 first year in Satyasai Women's College, Bhubaneswar in Arts stream. She has an ambition to work for the destitute children in future.

#### **For Permy (Fake Name) it was never late**

Ten years old Permy Munda of Keonjhar district lives with his parents. Both his parents are daily wage earners and had to look after 5 children. Permy is the eldest and had to take the responsibility to add something to the income of his parents. Hence, Permy was engaged in cow grazing activity and as a result he became a non-school going child. With the exchange of his labour he got 5 quintals of paddy by which his father managed the family. Permy Munda had a greater interest to



read but the wretched economic condition of his family was the stubborn obstacle on his way of education. His father had no interest to send him to school as Permy was the only ray of hope to earn something which could help in managing the family. The CRPC members and volunteers took cognizance of Permy's case and started an effort to counsel Permy and his parents. They encouraged Permy's father to send him to school by making him understand about Right to Education Act 2009 i.e. free and compulsory education up to 6 -14 years of age group provided by the Odisha govt. Then his father agreed to send him to school and enrolled his name in class I in Kumulabahali U.P. School with the help of PECUC's volunteer and CRPC members. Now Permy Munda is going to school regularly. His right to education has been successfully preserved by PECUC's initiatives.

#### **Role of CRPC – bringing Sumati (Fake name) back to school**

Sumati lost her father in a very tender age. She lives with her mother and other two younger siblings at a village of Keonjhar district. Her mother works hard as a daily labour to feed the four member family. Sumati also worked in place of her mother when she falls ill. Sumati was studying in class III in the U.P. school of Chinamaliposhi and always remained irregular in school in order to support her mother in household work. Due to their struggling economic condition, her mother was not interested to send her daughter to school anymore. In the mean time, Arjun Mohanta, VFW of the project found her working as a child labour and came to know that in spite of her interest to go to school, she had to work for her family. Then Arjun went to convince her mother to send her back to school, and simultaneously took her to Sraddha Bhawan to join other children. Moreover, in the monthly CRPC meeting he presented the matter. The Committee called Sumati's mother to the meeting held in 10th February 2010 and her situation was discussed with the Ward Member and Sarpanch, present in the meeting. Simultaneously an application was also handed over to the Sarpanch to recommend her name for Indira Awas Yojana and Widow Pension. The Sarpanch gave assurance in the meeting to provide her both the schemes of Govt. by the month of April and her application form was also sent to the Block from the Panchayat office.

Now Srimati Munda has no objection to send her daughter back to school and now Sumati has also appeared in the Annual examination. Srimati is also interested for further education of her daughter, if she gets benefit from the Govt. schemes.

#### **Parab Munda (Fake Name)**

Fifteen years old Parab Munda, son of Hari Munda of Swampatna Block of Keonjar district was taken to Goa by his relative working there as a contractor (Rainmon Munda) without the permission of his family and engaged him as a labour. Mr. Rainmon did not allow the boy to speak over the phone to his family members. In the course of time Hari Munda became the member of CRPC and shared his sufferings. Now, with the intervention of CRPC & MPV members the boy is back to home



safe with his earning of six thousand rupees and living a happy life with his parents and also the boy is continuing his study in the nearest school.

#### **Suman Munda (Fake Name)**

Suman Munda is a ten years old girl of Swampatna Block of Keonjhar district having five brothers and two sisters. They live in severe poverty. Suman collects the shalleaves from forest and makes leaf plates and sale them in market every day. She also goes for the daily wage earning to earn for her family livelihoods. The family lives with this little amount of money.

Her mother became a member in the SHG and participated in the IGP activity for which she could be able to earn her family livelihoods. Now her mother Gambhari Munda sends her daughter to Sradha Bahavan as she could be able to earn. Now Suman is a happy school goer.

#### **SrikunjaBihari Mohanta (Fake name)**

Srikunja lives Patna block of Keonjharwith his mother, sister and grandparents. His family depends on agriculture for their livelihood. As his father was no more and nobody is there to take forward his father's occupation, Srikunja engaged himself in the agricultural field instead of going to school. The Community Educator got the information and visited his house to interact with him and family members to make him understand about the importance of education. Ultimately, his grandfather allowed Srikunja to carry on his study and decided to lease his land for share cropping.

#### **Child labour free villages&GPs**

The efforts of PECUC bore fruit when 22 villages in Kendujhar districtwere made child labour free. In Baliana block of Khordha district, 2 Gram Panchayats namely Benupur and Bentapur are declared Child Labour free in the Gram Sabha of that respective villages.





# **List of Child Labour Free Villages of Patna block of Keonjhar District:**

Sl. No.	Block Name	GP Name	Village Name
1	Patna	Jomunaposi	Jomunaposi
2			Podmakesharpur
3			Kudhakhnan
4			Borudiposi
5	Rajnagar		Nuagaon
6			Nuakhnan
7			Raikala
8	Bodpatna		Tikayahapatna
9			Dohibahali
10			Kameswarpur
11			Patnali
12	Mirigikhojee		Bhaliadala
13			Mirigikhojee
14	Chinamali		Ketanga
15			Mushakhori
16	Mushakhori		Bodpodiaposi
17			Musanali
18			Bhalughar
19			Rathpoda
20	Muruswan		Kiapada
21			Dharuapada
22	Chemena		Bhurngrajposi





## National Child Labour project

### National Child Labour Project Scheme

Government had initiated the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme in 1988 to rehabilitate working children in 12 child labour endemic districts of the country. Its coverage has increased progressively to cover 271 districts in the country presently. As on date the Scheme is in operation in 266 districts.

Under the NCLP Scheme, children are withdrawn from work and put into special schools, where they are provided with bridging education, vocational training, mid-day meal, stipend, health-care facilities, etc. and finally mainstreamed to the formal education system. At present, there are around 7,000 NCLP schools being run in the country with an enrolment of three lakh children. Till date more than 9 lakh working children have already been mainstreamed to regular education under the NCLP Scheme.

The NCLP scheme is a Central Sector scheme. Under the scheme, project societies are set up at the district level under the Chairpersonship of the Collector/ District Magistrate for overseeing the implementation of the project. Instructions to involve civil society and NGOs have also been issued. PECUC also implemented NCLP schemes and created 5 NCLP Schools at Patna, Keonjhar, Bainchua GP of Baliana block, Kargil Slum, Mahima Nagar and Ashok Nagar under Bhubaneswar Municipality. PECUC rescued and mainstreamed 350 children under this Scheme.

Our participation in eradication of child labour cover educating community about the ill effects, encouraging parents to discourage sending their child to work and to send him to school, increasing enrolment rate, mapping, Sraddha Bhawan, bridge course for drop outs, counseling the child labour and parents, alternate livelihood support to women, promotion of farmers group to enhance their income and knowledge and much more.











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