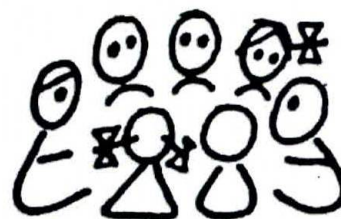
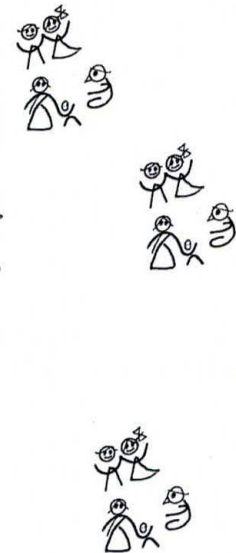
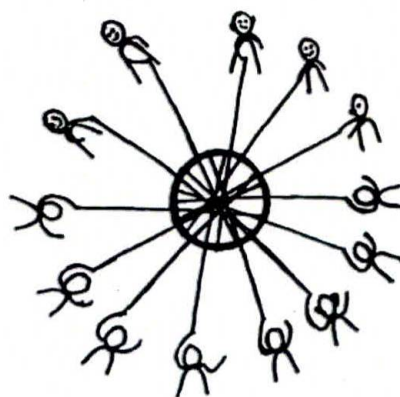


# Community Health Learning Programme

*A Report on the Community Health Learning Experience*

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## **Acknowledgement**

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## Story of My Life

I am born and brought up in a small village of Odisha in a tribal community. Spent time in agricultural lands, collecting non timber forest products in jungle, catching the fish in riverside, and playing with friends. We celebrate different festivals such as karma, Christmas, Mothers and Father's day, and youth festivals in open place under the trees in our tradition and culture by singing and dancing.

People were doing agriculture and collecting forest products, this was the source of livelihood. Condition of people was very poor, sometimes not getting food to eat then also something there was very precious. People used to live happy life. The real sense of community feeling was there.

My father was working outside, so for the purpose of study I left the village and came to town. Until class 7, I studied in government school and from 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> in private school. Higher secondary also completed in same place. Being a tribal I never faced any discrimination in the village or till class 7 but during high school for first time I felt the caste discrimination among the friend circle and by teachers. As the discrimination increased my level of frustration also increased and after completion of matriculation I was looking to study in a college where the tribal are in more number so that there will be no discrimination. I came to know BSW course from my junior friend. The course objective was to make aware of social issues and development of tribal youths of local areas. NISWASS has its main campus at Bhubaneswar with two more branches at Sundargarh district which known as tribal area campus and Gangpur College of Social Work in Phulbani District is hilly area campus known as Phulbani College of Social Work. I completed BSW from Gangpur College of Social Work in Sundargarh and later post-graduation in Master in Rural Management and Gandhian Studies (MRM) from main campus in NISWASS. After that worked as a research investigator for short-term period of time in Odisha. Through my fieldwork in post-graduation and as a research investigator I got chance to visit different and very remote places of Odisha. To be with the people and knowing their situation and condition is very different. I really felt the needs of people. Still now people are not getting food, water and staying in starvation, how the social systems are playing role in society. I really felt the poverty in India and my area of interest became stronger to work with poor and marginalized people.

## **Why I joined SOCHARA**

Before joining here, I was working in a NGO with youths; taking session for adolescents, youths and sometimes in community. While working I was feeling something was missing and lacking but not able to recognized it. I was not satisfied in my work and I left after two years.

I came to know about SOCHARA through my one of my colleague. When I checked the websites, I found that as per my aim and objective CHLP may be the proper place where I could learn. I want to develop my knowledge on research and though I did not have any idea regarding the health issues so I thought that through this programme I would gain some knowledge. This knowledge will be helpful for me to work in the community people especially with ASHA workers and Anganwadi teachers in designing the sessions for adolescent girls and it also be a good opportunity for me to learn under the guidance of experience staff so I sent my CV to SOCHARA and one month later joined as a flexi fellowship for three months.

### **Aim and Objectives**

My aim is to work with the community people specifically related to women empowerment. I am interested to work with poor and marginalized but among them women's are the most vulnerable group in the society. While working with them and in the field visits during BSW and masters many girls both married and unmarried were sharing their feelings, thoughts, wishes and problems. By strength and capabilities also they are not able to fulfill their wishes due to restriction of family and society. To live an independent live one has to struggle a lots. That time onwards I thought and realized to work on women's issues in future.

### **Objectives**

- To develop my understanding regarding community health
- To understand on women's health and women empowerment
- To develop idea and knowledge to conduct a research
- To understand adolescent and importance of life skill education
- Field visit to organization working on women's issues

### **Learnings**

My learning in Sochara includes from

- Collectives sessions
- Visit to different organizations
- Observation from Vimochana

## Community Health

### **Learning from Collective sessions**

#### **Health:**

Before my understanding on health was only limited to hospitals, treatment, doctor and medicines. During sickness, one can go to hospital and take the medicines. But after coming here I knew it is not limited to only hospitals, doctors only prescribe medicines but doesn't see the root cause of the problem why and how person getting sickness.

Root cause of the ill health are depends on inequality, poverty, exploitation, violence's and injustice etc. and the country like India all these issues and problem are increasing day by day which we see every day in newspaper and TV. Many parts of the country people are not getting proper food and water to eat and drink. Government is spending crores of money through programmes and schemes but the result is zero. In India around 40% children are malnourished, 70% women are having anaemia. One can understand the rate of poverty level in India. In the name of tradition and culture; religion, caste, class, gender are responsible in creating inequalities in society. Politics and privatisation are also playing an important role in exploitation the people of poor and marginalized.

#### *Definition says*

According to world health organization "Health is a state of complete physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

This definition says health is our rights and to be a healthy society. Now the question arise who all are healthy in our society, why and how?

#### **Community:**

Community means a group of people living together in a particular place, especially one practicing common ownership. Community was not a new word for me. Though during my BSW and MRM various time I have come across this word, it was a just a theory and knowledge to get good marks in the examination. But after coming here I understood it is not just a word, it has deeper meaning, certain values, we feelings among community people, beliefs, trust, brotherhood within community. It is the celebration of happiness and sadness together in singing and dancing. Solving the community problem with unity. This is the real sense of community but it is also true that finding such a community is difficult in present scenario. But through our effort and the work of dedication and good leadership of the community leader, empowerment of women's group it is possible to lead an ideal community.

## **Exposure visit**

Exposure visit is always very specific and unique. It is the practical knowledge to see and understand the things in different way. Same thing happens to me also. By visiting different organizations and interaction with them enhance my knowledge and skill to reflect and analyze of the problems and issues. Though I went for less exposure visits, I enjoyed a lot. It became a learning as well as togetherness, fun, enjoyment with the friends circle.

### **APD (The Association of People with Disability)**

APD stand for the Association of People with Disability. It is located in Karnataka, working in districts of Bangalore (urban), Kolar, Chikaballapur, Davengere and Bijapur. The vision is ensure to equality and justice and mission is to enable and empower all stakeholders. Ensure opportunities, promote inclusion and access to rights and entitlements. APD has four verticals: early intervention, spinal cord, livelihood and education.



**Shradhanjali Integrated School**

APD is founded by Ms N H Hema, who was paralyzed by polio in her childhood. I was not able to meet her but listened from the people of APD about her work and spirit, zeal and enthusiasm to fight with government officials for land to establish APD. She moved most of the country with wheel chair for the rights of disabled person which is very difficult. Her life story is very inspiring to me in my future work.



### **Sustainable Agriculture Livelihood Training**

Visiting Horticulture centre is another exciting experience for me. In the year 2001, the land in Kyalasanahalli was given in lease by the government and is being used by APD people as a Horticulture training and therapy project. Each year students get livelihood training through the course for both 10<sup>th</sup> pass and fail students. Till now around 1500 students completed horticulture training and living the life with dignity and respectfully.

This was my first field visit in Sochara and it was very inspiring and encouraging learning for me. Each child has special and unique skills by their activities. APD is creating an inclusive society, where people with disabilities are accepted into the mainstream economy and social life. This is a culture where they are earning and living a life of social life.

### **APD, Davanagere**

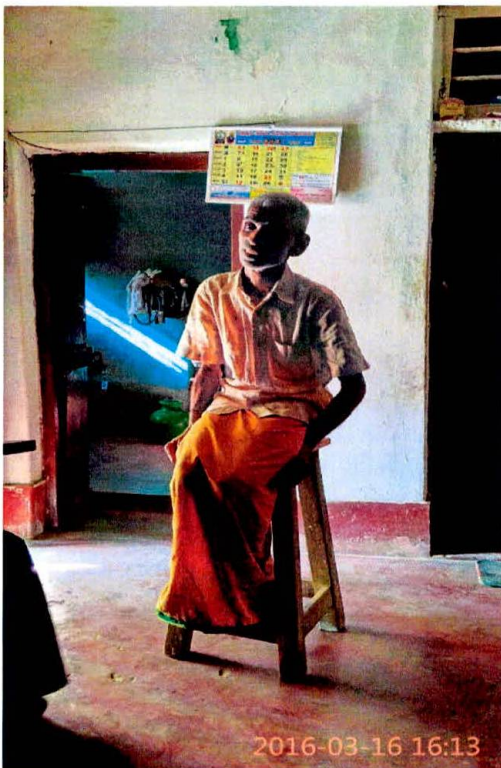
Balentina and I visited APD at Davanagere. There my objective was to know about mental illness. How it affects, what are the reasons and causes behind mental illness. Before going to Davanagere I had watched the documentary film on Lallappa of Andhra Pradesh. So I had little bit idea before reaching to field.



On the first day I came to know about the starting of APD in Davanagere including the process followed by people in establishing it. We visited household of mental ill person in Harihara.



Radha, a person suffering from cerebral palsy from the age of eleven years. She is not able to sit and walk by herself. Her education is till 6<sup>th</sup> standard when she became disabled. Now she is 26 years old. Family members are always been supporting and encouraging her. By lying on the bed she makes different rangoli in copies. Still now she has completed more than 100 rangoli in varieties of design. With her mother she used to go for health camp and regularly taking medicine. In each fifteen days one person from APD visited to their home to see and to do counselling. Due to supportive and positive environment she is always happy and cheerful.



Next home visit was Harihara, opposite to Lingewara temple. Name of the person was Girish Uppakara (40) going through mental depression since long time. He is unmarried and before 5 years his parents died. No one was there to share his feelings and thoughts, his loneliness led him towards mental depression. He stopped working, mingling with people and did not stay at home. Spending time by moving here and there, in temples, roads and bus stops. Eating whatever food getting from people otherwise staying without food. He identified by APD person in the last six months and by regular counselling he is going to health camp, taking medicine regularly. Now he uses to go for work and mingle with the people.



**Industrial Training Centre (ITC)**

Person with disability can be considered as a vulnerable group in the society. It is very difficult for society to accept and believe that disabled persons also have talent and potential. They think disabled persons cannot do anything. They are dependent on others. With this belief and thoughts no opportunities are created for them. For inclusion of such people APD has created a space of friendly atmosphere as well as an environment to show their skills and capabilities by providing education and vocational trainings. Volunteering opportunities include data entry, soft skills, communication skills, conducting sport activities, cultural activities, designing posters, photography etc.



### **Hallasabalu Village**

In this village we met with Chandra Basapa (28) and Deepa (24). Both of them were going through mental illness. Chandra Basapa had the case of love failure and Deepa had case during her school period when she was class 9<sup>th</sup>. She left school and going through mental problem since 9 years. Now last six month both of them were identified by APD and the treatment and counselling process is going on. For both of them family supports was less because they also did not know about mental illness.

### **Disable Cooperative Society**

It is a good initiative of Karnataka government to support for disable person for their livelihood. It is the first bank in India established in Davanagereat Harihara. This bank is known as "Ashakirana Disability BikalaChetanara Multipurpose Cooperative Society". This is only for disabled person and was started in 2015. Till now 66 people have opened their accounts. After the savings of 5000 each individual can gets 20,000 rupees as a loan to start or run their business with very low interest. This is the thing needed in society because most of the people never believe the capabilities of the disable person. They have the talents and hidden qualities, but not getting the space to come out, to become self-independent.

### **Snehadaan**

Snehadaan is a centre for PLHIVA. It runs by a religious group. Here I visited another two places, Sneha Care Home and Swanthana. As the name of this organization, "*Sneha*" is given to the people, whom the society does not accept. HIV infected person face and live the life of discrimination. Not even children are accepted by the society.

Snehadaan is playing important role by providing a positive environment to HIV infected persons and students in terms of treatment and education. By visiting here I came to know some of the therapy for AIDS. It is not curable but the proper medicine and positive attitude can lead a life for longer time.

Sneha care home is for the HIV children. Free education is given to the children. With free education, sports, cultural activities, drawing competitions are also organized for them. They have specific curriculum which includes not only course books but also the art of living. Their curriculum includes nutritional care, hygiene, co-curricular activities, spiritual care, medical care, protected environment, psychosocial support, value based information and education.

Visit of Swanthana was painful and heart touching. This centre is run by the Daughters of St. Camillus. Sisters take cares of mentally challenged girls and most have multiple disabilities.

These girls are found from railway station, drainage, garbage bins, dump yards where family members leave them and go away. All this children are brought by the local police.

The work of sisters is above all the work. I felt the love of Christ like the work of Mother Teresa, providing love and services in respect of nothing. It is not an easy work to take care of mentally challenged girls. All the cleanliness during menstrual cycle period everything done by sisters.

Before Karnataka government was supporting but now it has stopped. So it is difficult to manage this centre due to lack of funds but sisters have a strong belief that god will help them.

### **Candle light vigil for slum dwellers:**

Several NGOs of Bangalore city organized a protest against domestic violence at Town Hall. This protest mostly focused the evictions of slum dwellers by chasing them from slum. This protest was conducted through songs and dance by cultural group.

Many slum dwellers come forward to protest and fight for their rights. More numbers of women are participated in the protest. They shared their experiences, how were they were discriminated in the cities by different people and by the policy. They were beaten up by police for raising their voice for the rights.



It is the slum dwellers who build the roads and who clean the cities. Now the government is chasing them out from the Bangalore city in the name of cleaning the cities. They also said during the election time political people come to slum and provide sweets and sarees for the

price of their voting. They are always staying in fear, fear for their life for the piece of land. No peace in the mind.

Vimochana organization said, the law for cities and the for slum is same. So we should not afraid to fight for our rights. We need to be united together.

Slum dwellers are the poor people havingmigrated from different parts of country for the source of livelihood. Though they are poor they are excluded from society. This is the culture of government from very beginning to chase them out from cities and making in the place for luxury and for the profit maximization for economic development. In cities slum dwellers are the sufferer and in the village poor and Scheduled Tribes are the sufferer to save their land and jungles.

### **Grace:**

Grace is the organization working in the different issues in urban slums in Bangalore. It acts as a coordinator between the urban poor, the urban citizens group and the government. Grace runs a total 16 activities to in the slums of Bangalore. One of which is waste management of city.

Waste Management is all the activities and action required to manage the waste materials and products from its inception to its final disposal. This includes collection, transport, treatment and disposal of waste together with monitoring and regulation. It also encompasses the legal and regulatory framework that relates to waste management encompassing guidance on recycling etc.

Grace is responsible for collection and segregation of the waste. For the disposal and recycling it goes to different place. Here I knew nothing is the waste, each waste materials has the price. Whatever materials comes it weighted and maintained in a proper register, then goes for segregation.

### **Interaction with E.P Menon:**

Interaction with E.P Menon is very interesting and inspiring. His life of journey is the learning for me. By interacting with him, I felt the problems and challenges are the opportunities to learn and experience. It gives confidence to grow in life. Problems and challenges are the part of learning. Unless without taking strong action society will not be change. By the story of Assam boy, I realized the attitude of youths of today. How the attitude of a boy, changed from killing of person from organizing the people. As a community worker we need to create positive environment to the people. The role of women has to be change. Society needs equality and justice, and then we can see the social change.



### **Vimochana:**

As my one of the objective was to know and understand the women issues and women empowerment so Sochara gave me chance to go field visit in Vimochana.

Vimochana works for women rights, particularly in the tribal, rural and slum communities. Providing support to women victims of male violence and deal with atrocities committed towards them. It also works towards changing the economic and political structure to create a society where women are respected.

### **Visit to Halasuru Women's Group**

I was the women empowerment in the group of Halasuru community. Women's group has formed 10 years back. Now they are able to manage and deal with the cases of domestic violence without support of Vimochana. By seeing the activeness of women in the areas they selected for the group. Here I saw one case where a girl is suffering through domestic violence case by her husband and how the women group is dealing with the case.

### **Reflection**

Through the field visit of Vimochana I could see and felt the violence's face by the women in family and by their own people, by husband and in laws family. Every day they go through physical violence, mental violence and emotional violence. In Victoria hospital I saw the case of

burned women due to dowry and domestic violence. When torture is unbearable they come to organization for the separation. The society has created such a system where women suffer and male person enjoyed the power. Needs of women has to empower economic and socially. Gender and Patriarchy system has to be changed. Then only there will be equality and peaceful life.

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