

Kundiamba: A Tribal Gram Panchayat's struggle and success in child nutrition

Kundiamba Gram Panchayat (population as per 2011 Census: total 1,583, females 794, males 789) of Dediapada Block is located in Narmada district in the state of Gujarat, India. The village is located at about 58 KM from Rajpipla (district headquarters), and 13 KM from Dediapada, the nearest town and the block headquarters. Children's population below 6 years includes a total of 246 (female 110, male 136). The village is populated mainly by tribal people, and others include only 27 persons (16 females, 11 males).

Governance: Mr. Maganbhai has undertaken various work such as roads, drinking water supply, land levelling, wells, soak pits near hand pumps for water recharge, kitchen garden and child nutrition.

Child Nutrition: There are 3 AWCs in the village. There are 3 to 4 children in Severely Acute Malnourished (SAM) and 10 to 12 children in Moderately Acute Malnourished (MAM) categories in the village currently, and it is usual every year. He, along with other Panchayat members, thought that the children's malnourishment can be addressed by providing eggs as meal in the AWC. (It may be noted that, in this tribal area, the people eat non-vegetarian food and vegetables are scarce due to lack of irrigation facilities). The Sarpanch proposed to the ICDS department at the block level to include eggs in the AWC meal menu. However, the decision could not be reached at the block and the district levels. The Sarpanch then escalated it to the state level. There was a huge reluctance at the state level also for including eggs in the AWC meal menu (as Gujarat is known for vegetarianism). It took a few months before the state government delivered the guidance that the local communities may take up a suitable decision based on the local culture. It was a win for the GP in the beginning of 2020. The AWC started serving eggs in early 2020, but then there was a lockdown due to Covid-19, and the AWCs were closed. Therefore, the implementation was disrupted and results were not available for children's growth.

Education: Mr. Maganbhai also supported the village primary school by developing a sports ground for children. Library has also been set up with AKRSP's support. (AKRSP - Aga Khan Rural Support Program - India).

Women empowerment: There are 10 Sakhi Mandals in the village under Mission Mangalam and 3 of them are active.

Public Health: In Covid-19 situation, the GP took actions such as fumigation and restricted entry into the village for the outsiders. There is no positive Covid case in the GP so far.

Other: Under MGNREGA, various works have been taken up such as metal road, ponds deepening or renovation, compost pit, cattle shed etc. Rs. 60 to 70 lakh were spent in such works.

Leadership: Mr. Maganbhai is an active leader. Usually 3 Gram Sabhas take place in a year, and 50 to 100 people participate in each.

Future plans

The challenges include collection of people's contribution in various schemes, as the economic condition of most of the households is poor.