

### Case Study 3: Dhobabandha Huda

Dhobabandha Huda is a slum community situated in the western part of Brahmapur. The residents belong to Schedule Casts (SC) and work as daily laborers in constructions sites, rickshaw pullers and bamboo basket weavers. The community unlike many slums in Brahmapur is not along the busy roads, this makes the community relatively safe from traffic and orderly. A government-built 'pokhari' or pond is the source of water for bathing and washing. Potable



water source has also been installed by government. However, while there is one Anganwadi Center in the community at the end of the street, it only caters to a small part of Dhobabandha Huda community and an adjacent slum community. The large part of community is served by an Anganwadi worker from one of the house by occasionally distributing cooked food to children 3-6 year old. Other service are highly erratic if none in the at all. Given the small house each inhabited by multiple families, there is no available house in the community for an AWC. Further, the CDPO cannot find a space to rent in the nearby General Cast neighbor because house owners are not willing to let SC children inside their house.

As the YSD team started the ICDS citizen monitoring project and informed the community of the benefits and guidelines of ICDS, two of the residents, Ramesh Das and Bati Swain, filed separate RTI applications demanding the list of ICDS beneficiaries, records of food items provided by the CDPO and distributed by the AWW, records maintained by the AWC, other service provided by the AWW beside food rations and information about Kishoress Shakti.

It was found out from the response of the CDPO that there were "ghost beneficiaries" in the list of beneficiaries. Many erroneous entries were also discovered in the records such as wrong names of parents of child beneficiaries, age, etc. It was also earned that due to insufficient funds; the CDPO released a directive to the AWW to provide food rations to lesser number of beneficiaries than the actual number of ICDS eligible residents.

Until now, not all eligible beneficiaries are able to receive the food rations. No pre-school classes are being held in the community.

A glimpse of shop is now felt by the citizen monitors because according to CDPO, they are looking into realigning ICDS resource to community with large need for the programme. For instance, reconsidering AWCs in non slum areas where small number of children are attending pre- school classes or receiving food rations because parents have ample resources to determine the changes in focus and distribution of resources of the ICDS and hopefully all eligible beneficiaries in Dhobabandha Huda will receive appropriate amount of food items and service.

Citizen monitoring may not achieve the desired changes immediately, however with the use of RTI it helps ordinary citizens determine their right as well as the issues that needed to be addressed. It also gives a push to the service providers to assess their work and come up with better ways. Sustaining the effort is always a challenge but the citizen monitors of Dhobabandha Huda are determined to work for a better quality of life.