



1 + 1 = 11

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For some,
a formula for social engineering*

Child reporters of Orissa are adopting this formula to make local development a process where children play a pivotal role

Acknowledgement

I express my deep gratitude to the residents of Koraput and Dhenkanal districts who have passionately come forward to be a part of this important initiative. Despite their pressing demands on time and life, they spared time for us to document the initiative. At the same time I appreciate the wholehearted helps from the UNICEF Orissa team, the district administrations and the civil society groups. Cooperation and contribution of Snehasis Das and Richard Mahapatra to this effort have made it possible

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Child reporters of Orissa are adopting this formula to make local development a process where children play a pivotal role

Ranjan K Panda

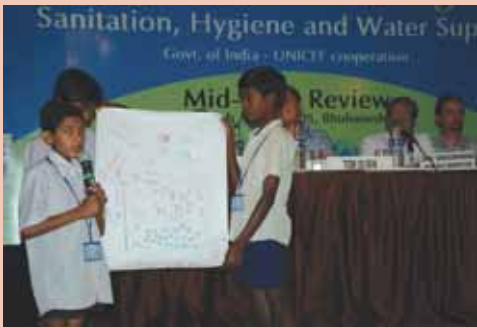
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Reporters at work



Summary

The child reporter initiative in Orissa's Koraput and Dhenkanal districts is an initiative that seeks to make children partner and catalyst of local development. Based on the concept of child right to participate in their own development, it is being implemented under the Advocacy and Partnerships programme of UNICEF Office for Orissa along with state government and civil society organisations. The initiative taps into the neutral questioning ability of children to identify local development problems and opportunities. Village children observe, document and disseminate local problems and issues that impact them directly or indirectly. Doing so it is observed that children not only positively contribute to local development but also to their own grooming as conscious and informed citizens. The hope is that this cadre of child reporters would act as advocates for girls' education, school sanitation, and child survival - bringing about social change.



PHOTOGRAPHS: RANJAN K PANDA

Rhymes of change

“We have made our thoughts into words. Words are turning into actions as people listen us. We have to watch our actions to make them habits. Because this is a habit of being part of the local development. My friends and me want to be equal partners in our development.”

(NILA CHALAN, A 14-YEAR-OLD CHILD REPORTER OF KORAPUT DISTRICT, ORISSA)

Development in one of India's poorest district, Koraput in Orissa, is assuming a different meaning altogether. Children are increasingly becoming agents of change. Often pushed to the margin of development process, children are not only becoming active participant in local development but are also asserting their rights to be so. And

This cadre of child reporters is being co-opted to act as advocates for girls' education, school sanitation, and child survival – bringing about social change

everybody is willingly making space for them.

The child reporter initiative in Orissa's Koraput and Dhenkanal districts is the catalyst for this change. The initiative seeks to make children partner and catalyst of local development. Based on the concept of child right to participate in development, it is being implemented under the Advocacy and Partnerships programme of UNICEF Office for Orissa along with state government and civil society organisations.



The initiative taps into the immense abilities of children to identify local development problems and opportunities. Village children observe, document and disseminate local problems and issues that impact them directly or indirectly. Doing so it is observed that children not only positively contribute to local development but also to their own grooming as conscious and informed citizens. This cadre of child reporters is being co-opted to act as advocates for girls' education, school sanitation, and child survival - bringing about social change.

Nursery of development

"I didn't know how could I be useful to the society as a child because development was always done by adults. The child reporter initiative gave the opportunity to be a part of my immediate society."

(SUBHASANKET DAS, A CHILD REPORTER OF DHENKANAL DISTRICT, ORISSA)

Children, though, are focus of most of the development programmes; they hardly participate in the process of formulating development programmes. Participatory development process tends to bypass children. Children (below 18 years of age) constitute 50 percent of world's population. So any failure to involve this section of population in development process means



bypassing half of our society in the development race. It has been the practice to design and implement development schemes for children without involving them directly or taking their inputs into the schemes. As a result many development initiatives have turned out to be just out of sync with children needs and rights.

Though since late 1970s participatory development planning is being acknowledged as a basic principle of development programming, children are often

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stripped of this right. Children play a subordinate role to the adults. Children suffer from wrong presumption that they are unaware and inarticulate of the world around them. On the contrary they are the most independent observer of the world and can play very constructive role in identifying problems.

International law states that children have the right to express their views on all matters and decisions affecting them, according

to their maturity. The UN convention of the Rights of the Child (UN, CRC), which has been ratified almost universally, states that it is a subject of rights who is able to form and express opinions, to participate in decision making process and influence solutions, to intervene as a partner in the process of social change and in the building up of democracy. The countries, including India, which have rectified this convention, should be doing this recognizing the rights of child.

Child participation is founded on the premise that children are consulted in a way that is inclusive and supportive to everyone involved. There are four strong reasons for involving children in development process. They are:

- **Incorporating voices of children as development feedbacks:** Children provide neutral but just assessments of impacts of development on society.
- **Development effectiveness:** Experiences worldwide show that participation of children in development planning and programme designing leads to better outcome and policies.
- **An informed society:** Children participation prepares the future generation to be better informed on local issues as well as to be skilled in designing development programmes. One way this results in communities getting more sensible to local



development.

- **Honouring basic rights:** Children participation through the development planning, designing and implementation is accepted as a basic human right. So involving children in local development means enabling them to access a fundamental right.

Similarly, as experiences point at, the impacts of child participation in local development are felt positively at many levels. They can be categorised as below:

- **Impacts at child level:** Children become self-confident and develop abilities to engage with their surrounding more effectively. As they become aware of the problems in their immediate vicinity, they also tend to take informed decision on problem solution. Constant interactions with various types of people – officials, local elected representatives, communities, and teachers – create a social net for children.
- **Impacts at family level:** In Orissa's Koraput and Dhenkanal districts where the child reporter initiative is undergoing, we see improved parents-children relationship. As children take more interest in local development, parents seem to be getting more involved in the daily activities of children.
- **Impacts at community level:** Child participation invariably leads to more community participation in

Development's first alphabets

As a signatory of the Convention on the Rights of Child, India should do the below under Article 12 of the convention:

- State parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child



- For this purpose the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly or through a representative or appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

local development. Children raise awareness, which results in attracting more adult attention to the problems. Adults, i.e. family members, community leaders and officials, are the targets of children participation in

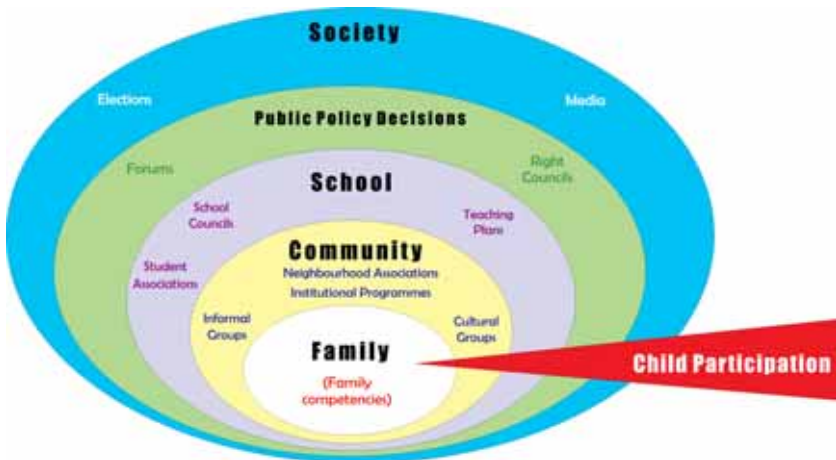


development process. So, child participation results in increased child and adult participation in local development.

- At institutional level: Child participation leads to better

functioning of local institutions. For example, in Orissa cleanliness in school has gone up after child reporters took this issue. There is increased school attention to this problem.

Get to the core: Child participation in development



The story of Orissa's child reporters

What is it?

"I am Nila Chalan of Orissa's Koraput district. I am a 14-year-old kid. My parents say I ask lots of questions. My elders say that children are meant to ask questions. In my district, known for bad things like poverty and underdevelopment, I feel like asking more questions. For children like me, it is better to know some questions than all of the answers. Because, we children ask innocent questions to bring forth critical problems of lives and time surrounding us."

NILA CHALAN, THE 14-YEAR-OLD CHILD REPORTER OF KORAPUT DISTRICT

Nila Chalan, the 14-year-old child reporter of Koraput district, is not a stereotype village kid. She spends a substantial part of her free time in assessing the physical conditions of her village, makes round of local health centre and also queries teachers on how to make more girl children attend school. She writes down all her questions or observations, after making rounds of her village, in postcards and send them to Koraput-based KFA office. There an editorial board publishes those observations in a magazine called Ankurodgam. When copies of this magazine reach to various decision makers in the district, Nila

has already made an impact. "People take note of the problems," she says. Rather she has completed a now clichéd cycle of advocacy: information leads to knowledge, knowledge to wisdom and wisdom leads to development.

She likes to question more now. And encourages her other friends to do so. She is encouraged by the responses: "I want more and more children to be a part of this child reporter initiative. We are now directly contributing to local development." She flaunts her badge of child reporter saying: "It is our questioning ability that makes development programmes work in Koraput."

More than 1500 children in Orissa's Koraput and Dhenkanal districts have become child reporters. Each of them boasts of their role in local development like Nila. But none of them is complacent. For these districts where development is yet to make an impact on local lives, this initiative is at least helping in shaping them to be more relevant to local needs. Child reporters have been writing about sanitation in school to animal-human conflicts in local areas to girl child attendance in school. Serious problems in local areas but brought out by the most innocent observations. That could be the right impact of child participation in local development.

The complete picture: Joining the dots

- **Goal of the initiative:** The opinion and views of all girls, boys and young people especially from the vulnerable and excluded communities are systematically taken account in the development and implementation of policies and programmes that affect their lives at their homes, schools, local communities and institutions, in accordance with their evolving capacities, and are progressively institutionalized.
- **Strategies to achieve it:** Creation of opportunities for children participation by strengthening of capacities of children, capacities of adults who implement programmes, and strengthening the wider policy environment to make space for children.



How was it done?

"I saw my sister talking to many people and writing down her conversations. I asked my teacher to take me as a child reporter. Both of us are now eager reporters making our contribution to development of our village."

(SUBATI RUDHAI, A CHILD REPORTER OF KORAPUT)

The district authorities, civil society organisations with assistance from Unicef's child participation project in Orissa, the child reporter initiative uses the inherent questioning ability of children to reshape development programmes. The initiative, a part of the overall child participation in development programmes, aims at

involving children in identifying, analysing and disseminating local problems. This in turn will be productive feedback for horde of development programmes being





implemented at local level. While doing this, children are also being groomed to be informed and responsible citizens.

The project is based on the premise that children and adolescents have the right to express themselves freely and to have their views taken into account in all matters affecting them; that right must be respected and promoted. On the other hand policy makers and development planners at local level realize that children are often much better placed than external duty-bearers to take the lead in assessing and analysing their own situation, and coming up with possible solutions.

The initiative traces its genesis to a child journalist project of Unicef. Unicef conducted a child journalists project in Bhubaneswar for four

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months in 2004 involving 35 children from seven schools. Under this initiative children were trained in journalism. This was to enable them to make field trip and produce reports based on their observation. Encouraged by the depth of observation among children and innocence of bring forth problems marring various schemes, it was decided to use this tool in rural areas. The challenge was in ensuring

The process has three distinct stages: selection of child reporter, information collection by child reporter and dissemination of it through print magazine

genuine participation of children from marginalised groups or families who are poor, or children in difficult circumstances. “Usually the wealthy or better-educated are the first to pick up new services or subsidies, or opportunities to influence plans. The poorest children are most likely to be denied the right and opportunity to make their views heard,” notes a Unicef assessment done based on contemporary experiences of child participation in development process. So the first choice was Koraput district (see box).

The challenge of inclusion

The challenge lies here how do we involve the poorest and the under privileged children in the process of creating child reporter? One of the remarkable aspects of the child reporter initiative is the process of participation, starting from designing the programme to its implementation. All the organisations involved with this initiative thought it clearly that participation of children from the under privileged section of Koraput district will be the touching principle. The process has three distinct stages: selection of child reporter, information collection by child reporter and dissemination of it through print magazine.

For close to seven months all the stakeholders debated and discussed the participation issue. Immediately after the Bhubaneswar experiment





of Unicef, in February 2005 the Koraput district officials and local NGOs started discussion on the modalities of the project. Two most backward development blocks – Pottangi and Dasmanthpur – were chosen for initiation of the project. These two blocks are tribal dominated and featured very low in overall human development index within the district.

It is imperative that less privileged children will be the initiators of the project. But the pertinent question is how to select the first batch of child reporter and also from which schools to be able to do so. It was crucial as success of the first batch could decide the spread of the initiative in future. At the same time failure in setting up an effective first batch means risking the project's long-term viability.

The project went through two stages of debate and discussions. First, debate at the district level to seek and co-opt local stakeholders into the project. Second, at the project implementation level, where the Unicef and its partners debated on long-term sustainability of the project as well as capacity building activities for the child reporters.

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The structure with many pillars

District authorities, local NGOs workers and selected school teachers along with community representative decided that there must be a selection procedure for setting up the first batch of child reporter. These groups decided that 100 children would be selected from these two blocks. Each block will cover five villages and five schools. So 10 villages in two blocks will contribute 100 children from 10 schools. To shortlist the schools, the block development officers and district education functionaries played a crucial role. They selected the schools based on overall performance, socio-economic profiles of students and also based on past record of education excellence.

From each school in each village 10 students will finally make the child reporter team. School teachers and local functionaries conducted writing competition to shortlist the 10 students to qualify to be child



reporter. To make sure that girl children get equal representation, the final selection applied this condition. The team of child reporter would elect a team leader, again one among them. This one way is the first conscious decision to instill leadership ability among the children. To involve the teachers in the process, crucial given that children would be needed to spare time for reporting, it was decided that each team of child reporter would be put under a teacher for overall assistance.

In the first year, the district collector was a partner as it was a part of the village based developed

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programme called Ankur, a joint initiative of the district and the Unicef. It helped in getting the right administrative support for the programme. Later the district primary education programme (DPEP) joined the initiative.

Building the right capacity

To build the capacity of the child reporters a series of workshop was held. To begin with these workshops were meant for orientation of the child reporters. Orientation workshops were to, first, inform the child reporters about the state of development of their state, district and village and the roles children could play to make a difference. This was to explain the process of development to children so that they could figure out where to intervene. The second level of orientation workshop dealt with nuts and bolts of journalism and reporting. Local media people played the role of teachers for the children. Face-to-face training sessions are used to build participating children's capacity to communicate about the issues affecting them, through journalism. This trained children to observe, question, relate, and draw inferences - that is, to report.

Since that initial orientation, every month facilitators and reporters have visited each village to hold re-energizing/reinforcing visits and discussions with the child

reporter teams. Facilitators interact with the young reporters to learn what they have observed/written and to explore avenues for improvement. To facilitate the child reporter, the respective district magistrate signed a child reporter badge with a direction to local authorities to help the child reporters in accessing information and answering their queries.

Paper works

To give the entire process of reporting and writing a formal look and to use that for advocacy and project monitoring, the project helped publishing a magazine called Ankurodgam in Koraput and Kalika in Dhenkanal district. These magazines carry the reporting of child reporters after going through editorial spurning. To begin with each child reporter used to be given a diary and writing materials. The reporter would write down his/her observations after field trip here. At



the end of the month the editorial board for selection of articles for the magazines would collect the diaries. Off late, child reporter is just to write it down in a pre-addressed post card and drop it in the postbox.

One thousand and five hundred copies of the district bulletin are circulated to top decision makers, including those at the state and district level, members of the media, and key non-governmental organisation representatives. In this way, they provide a source of feedback for governmental, non-governmental, and international agencies on their developmental activities. The district level Ankurodgam is published every second month, while the block level magazine is published every month. The block level magazine started in 2006. At the block-level 5600 copies

of the magazine are being circulated.

The children also make special presentations of their writings at various forums of decision makers. For example, 10 child reporters traveled to the state capital to make a presentation before the Government of India, Government of Orissa, and UNICEF officials during the Mid Term Review of Child Environment programme. The child reporters presented about the water and sanitation and environment situation in their villages. In addition, two of the child reporters (both girls and one of them tribal) represented India at the International Conference on Children in Beijing hosted by Soo Ching Ling Foundation and UNICEF - China. They gave two presentations, one on media and children and one on gender discrimination in their area.



Cub reporters make news, bring change

If you think only sporting champions and computer geeks are getting younger by the day, think again. Journalists have also joined the gang. And they are making news for all the right reasons.

Some 1500 cub reporters – all of them school-going children – have been instrumental in heralding a change in Koraput district in Orissa – rated as one of the five most backward districts of the country by the Planning Commission – with their reporting. One of them, Sunita Gemel of Maliput village, even got the opportunity to participate in an international children's forum in Beijing recently.



Children they may be but there is nothing child-like about their reports. Most of the articles in Ankurodagam highlight the basic problems people of the district face – lack of drinking water, sanitation and health services inadequacies, inadequate number of teachers in school, loss of forests and drinking habit among elders. These children have become active campaigners of social change. And with their pen, they are slowly but surely nringing about a change for the better.

Source: The Hindustan Times

The new age paper

In addition to written and interpersonal modes of communication, the child reporters draw on the audio-visual medium. From among the 10 teams, 2 groups from each block (5 per group, totaling 20) are selected to receive basic training on audiovisual equipment so that they might document the village-based planning process. Specifically, the children are

provided with a hand held video camera along with a cameraperson. They either direct the cameraperson to record what they indicate or, under supervision, operate the camera themselves. Then the group cuts the film with help of an editor/operator. In this way, the 4 groups document 4 micro planning exercises in 4 villages. For example, some of the child reporters accompanied UNICEF volunteers on a project to conduct micro planning

in a remote village in Dasamantapur Block, Tarlaghat. The children stayed there for 5 days, documenting the entire process along with their independent findings, both in writing and by directing a video cameraman.

The Internet is also being used as a tool to foster communication by and among the child reporters and other children. In July 2006, the young reporters launched an



To strengthen the involvement of the child reporters with their village and locality, organisers will form Village Knowledge Banks in each of the villages where child reporters live

interactive web log with the following purpose (in their words): “We want to talk and communicate share our thoughts with the children



and everyone world over on our observations and learn from theirs”. For example, one of the first few postings reads, “Getting drinking water in our village is a big problem in our village.... The village needs some more tube wells, as the tube wells are far from the houses and the water from the tube well in the school is not good.”

To cite another example, to foster the publication of more of the child reporters’ writings, a block-level magazine will be published and displayed in the display boards of all the schools. Selected writings will then appear in the district-level magazine once every two months to be distributed all over the state among officials, decision makers and intellectuals. Finally, to strengthen the involvement of the child reporters with their village and locality, organisers will form Village Knowledge Banks in each of the villages where child reporters live. The children will explore, document and preserve local know-how in the



Knowledge Bank and take responsibility for maintaining it with care for the future. Part of the aim of this process is to equip teachers with a tool to stimulate children's interest in education.

It is spreading

The story of child reporter is spreading, as fast as the circulation of their magazine. From 10 schools and 100 child reporters in 2005 in Koraput, it has become a force of 1500 child reporters from all the 14 blocks of the district. The future plan is to involve 5000 children in 550 villages of the district. Earlier the school was the unit. Now village is the unit. And it has been decided that each child reporter team will have 60 per cent tribal children and 40 per cent have to be girls.

The participation of community

members and schools in the child reporters' work has been a key strategy as the project has developed. For instance, in order to stimulate a broader portion of Koraput's citizens to participate in improving society - as the child reporters have done - a People's Group for Children's Development (PGCD) with a secretariat at Koraput Farmers' Association was formed as part of this initiative. The process is being expanded to the entire district, with 300 schools and at least 1500 child reporters getting involved, representing all parts of the district. To begin, 248 Model Cluster Schools of the government were selected; these schools take part in the Programme on Girls' Education. Only girls from these schools, of which at least 60% belong to the marginalised Scheduled Tribe community, will take part.

Children turn reporters in Orissa

With no roads, little water and no basic amenities, the tribal people in interior Orissa are caught in a vortex of poverty. Children from Koraput district have decided to tell these stories of poverty a little differently. Their reports fill the pages of the first issue of Ankurodgam (regeneration), a monthly journal launched by Ankur, a joint initiative of the Koraput district administration and the Orissa branch of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). They are training children, mostly tribals, from classes III to VII from 10 villages under the Dasmantpur and Pottangi blocks as cub reporters. Though the eight-page magazine talks about issues such as drinking water shortages, the lack of roads, and the absence of doctors in hospitals and teachers in schools, there is freshness in the approach. The reports are unmistakably angst-ridden and show a desire to correct the flaws.



"Our village has a large number of children. But half of them are not going to school. Their parents make them graze cattle. The children who refuse are beaten up," wrote Kumar Muduli, one of the child reporters from the Upper Primary School at Murkar village. "There are many liquor vends in our village. The people of our village are blowing up their day's earnings by consuming liquor at these vends. Many people are suffering from different diseases by consuming liquor," said a report by Sabitri Panda.

"The Government planted saplings in our village, but they did not survive as they were planted towards the end of the monsoon," said Chinmayi Subudhi's report. There are several such accounts of the inadequacies of the developmental system.

Conceived by UNICEF, Ankurodgam started with 100 reporters to make school children aware of the development of their villages, infant deaths, sanitation, health, hygiene, education and other issues. And it has been a success. "These child reporters are a force to reckon with," says Lalatendu Acharya, communications officer, UNICEF. "The project aims to have 10 child reporters from each of the 170 gram panchayats of Koraput with a dedicated cadre of 1,700."

The Ankur project focuses on the survival, growth and development of the child. It aims to cover the 4,605 habitations and revenue villages in Koraput by 2007. Each village would have four 'Ankur' volunteers (two boys and two girls) who would be the driving force behind the development of the village. Village-based plans have been drawn in 16 villages, eight each in the Dasmantpur and Pottangi blocks.

The child reporters will act as monitors of the process. The Collector has given each child reporter a signed badge, which is a pass for them to enter any Government office.

Source: The Hindu

What have child reporters achieved?

“Child reporters have become the new source of getting development information in my village. Our information is objective and everybody thinks twice when we put a problem before them.”

(KAMESWARI PANGE, A CHILD REPORTER OF KORAPUT DISTRICT, ORISSA)

Around two years after the initiative, the question now arises what impacts had the child reporters on local development? Interactions with local communities, district functionaries and other stakeholders

bring out clearly that there is a distinct change in people’s attitude towards children and their potential to make impact on local development. Both in Koraput and Dhenkanal, one can see that the impact of the initiative is two-prong: on children’s own selves and on overall local situations. While two years are hardly a time to judge the impacts, but the initial change in people’s attitude to children vis-à-vis development process is important.

Looking at the impacts on children, there are instances to show that children registered as child reporter are more receptive to social problems as well as school disciplines. A survey by Sarva Siksha





Abhiyan (SSA) has found that the students have improved academically where the project has been going on. Padmini Pathi says, “We have found increase of psycho-social potential in children. They are active not only in schools but in the locality as well. They are asking questions about problems and issues to their parents, elders of locality and govt. officials. Instance – Chalanguada

school of Boriguma block.” In one instance the reporters came to know that one child was not coming to school as he was working as a child labour. They reported the matter to BDO and asked him to cancel the BPL card of the family as it made the child to work for livelihood. In a school in Narainpatna block, the reporters found children were coming to school only when the MDM lunch was served. They told the children to get out of the school. Later these children came to the school regularly to study.

Khursida Begum says, “Child reporters now hold monthly meetings among themselves to decide strategy on what to take up next in their magazine.” This is an interesting aspect as it shows that as

“Child reporters now hold monthly meetings among themselves to decide strategy on what to take up next in their magazine.”

local monitors of development programmes, they are maturing. "Leadership quality has developed in them. They ask more questions than other students. They have become more vocal. Academic performance has improved. Obviously academically better students are also joining as child reporter. But, after joining as CRs they have improved tremendously," says Begum.

Analysing the observations recorded in Ankurodam in the last

Most of the parents interviewed agreed that their children have become socially more conscious as well as show more inclination to education now than before

two years, an interesting trend emerges: child reporters are increasingly asking questions that relate to broader policy issues than just typical local issues. For example, in the first two editions of the Ankurodam magazines, there were more dispatches on schools and immediate village sanitation problem. But look at the latest two editions (preceding July 2007), there are more questions on corruption and overall development programme implementation issues. For example, one can find at least a dozen mentions about PDS and mid-day meal irregularities. Even the tone

of writing down observation looks matured.

Interviews conducted for this document and a visual documentary among child reporters, parents, teachers and district functionaries point at very interesting changes slowly taking place. On a question whether the initiative will make any impact on local development, the answer is a big 'yes'. On another question on how would this initiative help children in future, most of the child reporters replied in term of it helping them to decide on career that would enable them to conduct such activities. For example, few child reporters desired to be journalists and also police officers. Parents, on the other hand, feel that the initiative is making a positive impact on the overall growth of children. Most of the parents interviewed agreed that their children have become socially more conscious as well as show more inclination to education now than before. Teachers feel that the child



reporters have not only set in place disciplines among students but also among teachers. Schools invariably are having better sanitation facilities with the child reporters constantly

Media persons in the district feel that this has been an extremely successful project in highlighting the situation of children and women, and of village development in general

questioning about it. For the district functionaries, the initiative is a 'serious feedback' on various programmes.

UNICEF has come out with few indicators that capture few impacts of the initiative. They are:

At child level: Schoolteachers find that child reporters have improved with regard to: attendance,

handwriting, interest in studies, outlook, knowledge about the outside world, speaking skills, inquisitiveness, and confidence. More children in the schools are interested in becoming child reporters after seeing the work of other reporters.

At governance level: District authorities are reading the child reporters' bulletin. Some have remarked that it serves as a monitoring tool, giving them a first-hand account of the effect of their schemes and work at the village level. They are also using the report as a reference to take corrective actions.

At society level: Media persons in the district feel that this has been an extremely successful project in highlighting the situation of children and women, and of village development in general. They are also developing their own stories based on the child reporters' bulletin.

A nascent step

The experience of child reporters in Orissa is rather a beginning without any tentative ends to achieve. Because it is about making children a part of development process. And participation is not temporary or achievable within a fixed timeframe. It has to be a habit. It needs to adapt to new situations thus throwing new challenges. So the initiative has made the beginning, rather a nascent step in a very difficult place. But the first step, however fragile it is, is the most crucial step in a long journey.