



Human Dignity  
Social Justice  
Social Democracy



**32<sup>nd</sup>**  
ANNIVERSARY  
CELEBRATIONS

# RAYS *of* CHANGE

EMPOWERING MARGINILISED COMMUNITIES





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“Ours is a battle not for wealth;  
nor for power, ours is a battle for freedom;  
for reclamation of human personality.”

- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar



BABASAHEB  
**Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR**

FATHER OF MODERN INDIA

HIS IDEALS OF DIGNITY AND EQUALITY RESONATE DEEPLY WITHIN OUR ENDEAVOURS,  
GUIDING US TOWARDS A MORE JUST AND EQUITABLE SOCIETY

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**Alladi Deva Kumar**

Executive secretary, DBRC

## Greetings from Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre !!

It is with immense pride and gratitude that I introduce the remarkable compilation of stories within this book, aptly titled “Rays of Change: Empowering Marginalized Communities”. Each narrative encapsulates the indomitable spirit and resilience of the individuals and communities we serve through the Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre (DBRC).

The journey to empower Dalit, Adivasis and other marginalized communities has been one fraught with formidable challenges. Systemic discrimination, entrenched societal biases, and the widespread grasp of poverty have long hindered their progress. Yet, within these pages, you will find tales of triumph over adversity, of courage in the face of injustice, and of unwavering determination to forge a better future.

Operating across seven districts in Andhra Pradesh, DBRC is catalyzing transformative change in the lives of marginalized communities. Our commitment to fostering economic self-reliance, driving social transformation, and advocating for rights remains steadfast. Through initiatives rooted in Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s principles, we endeavor to dismantle barriers, promote literacy, and expand opportunities for all.

I extend my deepest gratitude to all our field staff, volunteers, and officials of various government departments who have consistently supported us, thereby leaving a profound impact on the lives of the most vulnerable people. Together, we stand united in our mission to address deep-seated social inequalities and uphold the inherent dignity and rights of every individual.

(A. Devakumar)

- **Deplorable conditions of waste pickers**
- **Advocacy with municipal corporation lead to integration into SWM**
- **Improved livelihoods and job security**

**D**alit Bahujan Resource Centre is committed to creating a brighter future for waste pickers in Guntur city who earn their livelihood by collecting discarded bottles, paper, and packaging materials from the roadside, railway tracks, dumping yards, bus stations, etc. These marginalized groups have historically been deprived of opportunities, and society has not recognized them. DBRC strives to break the chains of social discrimination and provide better opportunities for these underprivileged groups, resulting in positive changes in their lives.

Swachh Survekshan is an annual cleanliness survey conducted in India by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. It ranks cities based on their cleanliness and sanitation levels, promoting better practices and healthy competition among municipalities. One of the major indicators involves Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) integrating waste pickers into the Solid Waste Management (SWM) system and providing them with safety equipment and training, resulting in marks being awarded.

So, we met the Municipal Commissioner Smt. Anuradha and the Municipal Health Officer Smt. Sobha Rani, and requested them to integrate the waste pickers into the solid waste management undertaken by the municipal corporation. After a series of meetings and discussions, we entered into an MOU with the Municipal Corporation to provide 230 waste pickers for taking up a door-to-door waste collection in the Guntur municipal corporation limits. Earlier, they were provided only Rs. 8000, and salaries were paid once every 5 to 9 months. During this time the waste pickers suffered a lot, as they are accustomed to getting daily payments whenever they sell waste informally. Luckily, in 2019, the government has formed a corporation to pay the salaries of the staff directly and started



## **From the Margins to Mainstream: Ensuring Job Security for Guntur's Waste Pickers**

paying salaries on the 1st of every month. Currently, they are paid Rs. 18,000 per month, and they also have access to a Provident Fund and ESI.

Mrs. Seethamma, a waste picker leader said, “Earlier also, I used to collect waste, but there were times when I didn’t get access to waste. There were days when I had only one meal a day and struggled so hard. Now, I am employed. I have a job. I am working for the corporation, and I get my salary on time. I am able to feed my family and take care of my children.” I am also on the board of the waste pickers’ cooperative, and we support them whenever they need assistance. I am always indebted to DBRC.

The transformation of the waste pickers’ lives in Guntur city is a testament to the power of engagement with the government. 230 waste pickers now have better job security, working conditions, and respect for their profession. We are proud to have played a role in bringing about these positive changes and empowering marginalized communities. At DBRC, we remain committed to creating a brighter future for all and will continue to work towards building a more equitable and inclusive society. ■



## Realizing the Distant Dream of a Permanent House

- Identified Tribal families living under bridges, hill tops, river banks
- Facilitated basic entitlements through grievance redressal program
- DBRC took the issue to the government officials through series of interface meetings
- Continuous followup resulted in sanctioning 144 houses by the government
- AP TRICOR supported Rs. 66,000/- to each beneficiary through sub-plan funds due to consistant advocacy efforts

Marginalised communities such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes (ST), and other denotified tribes are constantly subjected to violence and are often forced to take up menial jobs in society. Despite having several legal protection laws and constitutional rights, they are generally tagged as someone who catches rats, collects waste, manual scavengers etc. DBRC, since its inception, is committed to work for the upliftment of these communities.

DBRC organised series of interface meetings between the government officials and the waste-picking communities to understand their problems and identify people with no identity cards and entitlements. One major issue faced by these communities is lack of a permanent house. Most of these communities reside beside the roads, in isolated areas, near railway tracks, etc. and are often evicted during road widening or when initiating new railway lines. Hence, these communities generally migrate from place to place and live in temporary makeshift tents.

Understanding the plight of these communities, DBRC, from 2017, has been consistently advocating with the MRO, joint collector, and collector to provide housing to these communities but in vain. In 2019, DBRC staff met the then collector, Sri. Imtiyaz and requested him to provide housing to waste pickers. The collector visited their areas and interacted with these communities and understood that there is an immediate need to provide housing. DBRC staff requested him to provide housing under the JNNURM scheme. Then we were informed that each beneficiary must contribute Rs. 66,000 to avail housing under this scheme. This requirement caused significant disappointment among the communities as most of them could not afford the beneficiary share.



Faced with the communities' inability to afford the beneficiary share, DBRC further advocated with the TRICOR (State Tribal Welfare Department) and requested their support in allocating funds from the SC/ST Sub Plan funds. After consistent follow-up, TRICOR approved the request and has allocated Rs. 66,000 per beneficiary to 144 households in a phased manner. Now, they have a permanent house to live in and we believe this will reduce migration among these communities.

Houses were allotted to 144 waste picker households across different places. To our dismay, we were shocked to see that there was no electricity, running water, drinking water, no doors and windows, and toilets were broken and were not in a usable condition. We promptly contacted the district tribal welfare officer and brought the issues to his attention. He subsequently visited the affected areas and initiated the process of providing electricity, drinking water, and other necessities by filing a request with the collector. The collector approved the request, and work on installing electricity meters and water supply is currently underway. The whole process took years of follow-up, and commitment of the team.

### **The following communities from different areas were sanctioned houses:**

**Bheemannavaripeta:** Bheemannavaripeta, located on a hillock within Vijayawada city, is home to marginalized communities traditionally engaged in fishing, rat catching and manual scavenging. These families previously resided on footpaths and in parks before moving to Bheemannavaripeta. However, government initiatives towards urban development, including road construction, park beautification, and utilization of barren land for recreational purposes, resulted in their displacement. Consequently, around 60 families relocated to Bheemannavaripeta, started living in temporary shelters without access to electricity or proper power supply. To make matters worse, the area is susceptible to landslides, posing a significant threat to the residents' safety.

**Krishna Varadhi:** Krishna Varadhi is a bridge built in addition to the Prakasam Barrage on the river Krishna. Krishna water is not released from the barrage unless it accumulates a considerable amount of water. As Krishna Varadhi is on the opposite side, it became a home for the poor. Waste pickers started living there by constructing temporary housing with the help of banners and sheets and are at constant risk of inflow of water. If barrage gates are released, it often sweeps their houses. They do not even have proper identities to apply for available government schemes.

**Krishna Lanka:** Fifty waste picker families are living in makeshift tents near the Prakasam Barrage, beside a graveyard. They face constant hardship during rains or floods as water often inundates their shelters, washing away belongings and forcing them to flee for safety. As they have migrated from different places and settled down here and lack proper documentation, they struggle to access essential resources and government schemes.

**RR Peta:** Raja Rajeswari Peta, an area within the limits of the city, has been home to several waste-picking communities. Around 88 waste-picking families live here and do not have permanent housing and access to government schemes as they do not have basic identity cards. Despite repeated appeals to the housing departments, no action was taken.

Securing housing for marginalized communities was an uphill battle, marked by persistent advocacy and bureaucratic hurdles. However, the provision of housing has brought transformative change, offering stability and dignity to families previously living in precarious conditions. Access to basic amenities has significantly improved their quality of life, reducing vulnerability to natural disasters. Despite progress, ongoing advocacy is needed to address systemic inequalities and advance social justice for all. ■

# From Neglect to Nurture: Revitalizing Chenchu Colony through Education and Welfare Initiatives

- Dire living conditions of Chenchu Communities in Kurnool city
- Advocacy led to establishment of government school and anganwadi
- Increased access to welfare and development schemes

This is the success story of an intervention by the Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre in Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh, aimed at bringing change to the lives of the most marginalized communities by establishing a school for the children, with the hope of creating a better world for future generations.

It all began when Mrs. Velpula. Jyothi, Coordinator of DBRC, Kurnool, visited the habitation of the Chenchus, where approximately 90 families and 600 individuals reside in the Chenchu Colony, situated in the 33rd Ward, Kalluru Estate, on the outskirts of Kurnool City. These Chenchu communities reside in huts made with sarees and flex banners, lacking basic amenities such as toilets, water, roads, electricity, health centers, and education facilities. The surroundings resembled a waste dumping yard, making it almost uninhabitable. Furthermore, the residents lacked Aadhar cards, ration cards, and access to government schemes meant for their welfare. There was no Anganwadi centre or school in the community, and children were not allowed in the nearby Anganwadi due to their appearance and unhygienic habits.

Most of them are waste pickers and often face discrimination. They are considered and booked as thieves by the police and the community when they move around to collect waste. Though they directly or indirectly contribute to keeping the city green, they are not recognized; rather, they are considered as thieves by the police and the community, and cases are filed against them.

DBRC has started implementing an intervention aimed at organizing the waste pickers, educating them about their rights and government schemes. During interactions with the communities, Jyothi has understood that most of the children do not go to school as the school is far away from their residence. Though many government officials and political leaders have



visited them, none have taken any measures to provide them support.

Moved by these circumstances, DBRC took a step to intervene to bring change in their lives and address their basic needs, including health, education, and housing. Through regular visits and interaction with the Chenchu community, a rapport was built between the community and DBRC. As we have learned that most of the children do not go to school, we have decided to advocate with the government to start a school in the community.

We have submitted a series of representations to the MEO and DEO requesting the setup of a school in the locality but to no avail. So, Jyothi, along with the children and parents of the Chenchu colony, around 200 of them, rallied to the collector's office to submit a representation about setting up a school in the locality which attracted media attention. The district collector immediately appointed a team to study the feasibility of starting a school in the community. The team has given a positive report, and the collector has instructed the District Education Officer to take steps to set up a school. After completing all formalities, a school was inaugurated on January 18, 2017, with four teachers. 145 children are attending the school. The district collector and the District Education Officer have appreciated DBRC for their efforts. Furthermore, DBRC continued negotiations with district officials and government departments to ensure that the Chenchu community could access all existing schemes and facilities. As part of this initiative, the District Collector has suggested consulting with Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) personnel at Srisailam to enrol the Chenchu community to avail all facilities under ITDA.

Our work has demonstrably improved the lives of the Chenchu people, particularly in education and welfare. We're committed to continuing our efforts to create lasting positive change for these communities. ■

# Breaking Chains of Caste: A tale of Hope and Justice

In India, a nation experiencing rapid growth, longstanding issues persist regarding caste discrimination, untouchability, and social hierarchy. Despite continuous efforts from the government, these deep-rooted caste prejudices remain largely intact among the people of the country. Caste continues to heavily influence economic, social, and cultural dynamics, perpetuating inequalities and marginalising Dalits, Adivasis, Bahujans and other marginalised sections of society. Though the Indian Constitution has provided constitutional safeguards for Dalits and Tribals, atrocities against the downtrodden have been increasing on a daily basis. The present story of a helpless father portrays the insecure life of socially disadvantaged people living in our society. It is extremely distressing and painful to witness this untold death story that happened in Marepalli village (name changed) of Prakasam district. K Suri (name changed), a 17-year-old boy from the Dalit community (Scheduled Caste), tragically became a victim of caste-based violence in a horrific incident.

In August 2018, Suri and his childhood friend went to a neighbouring village to meet their childhood friends. During the visit, one of his friends casually talked to his 17-year-old classmate, a girl belonging to the dominant community. This soon became the talk of the village. The girl's father, J Subhash (name changed), misunderstood the situation and tried to catch both boys. However, the one who spoke with the girl escaped, and Suri was caught. The furious girl's father, along with his mates, beat Suri and tied him to a tree. He hurled caste-based abuse at Suri's father and brutally tortured Suri for more than two hours, hitting him with sticks and ropes and burning him with cigarettes.

Upon receiving news of the incident, Suri's father rushed to the scene by 8 pm, accompanied by his relative N Pradeep (name changed). He found his son in a terrible state. Begging for his son's life, he caught the girl's father's feet and pleaded with him. The girl's father responded with further abuse, warning him that he would kill them if the situation is repeated.

The injured boy returned home with his father and relative, where he received first aid from the local

- Dalit boy brutally assaulted for simply conversing with a Dominant Caste girl
- Assault leads to the tragic suicide of the Dalit boy
- DBRC steps in to provide justice to the bereaved family

doctor. That night, the helpless father explained the evil social hierarchy and rigid mindset that led to the dominant caste people's discrimination against Dalits, a practice that had persisted for generations. Suri, overwhelmed by the harsh reality of society and unable to bear the pain of humiliation, took his own life by hanging the next day.

The Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre (DBRC) stood as a pillar of support for the grieving father in his fight against the atrocity and discrimination he faced. Mr. Koteswararao, the regional coordinator of DBRC, along with the team, visited the victim's family to provide moral support. The team prepared a memorandum, duly signed by the father, citing G.O. Ms No. 95 SC/ST Atrocity Act, and submitted it to the police station. A FIR was immediately lodged, and efforts began to apprehend the accused involved.

People from the dominant caste kept on verbally abusing the boy's family with mean words for filing a police case. A local MLA and political leaders even threatened the victim's family. However, DBRC stood firm by the victim's family. They filed a FIR and advocated relentlessly to get relief from the local government.

A compensation of ₹7.5 lakhs was released to the bereaved family under the POA Act, and all the accused were jailed. While the loss of life is irreplaceable, DBRC is striving for the family's social and economic upliftment. They are equipping the family to access the provisions available from the government for victims of SC/ST atrocities. Currently, the DBRC team is following up to help the family secure the remaining provisions under the POA Act.

Now, the grieving father has hope that he and his family will receive social support. He also cherishes the hope that one day, the dominant castes' mindset towards marginalized communities will change. He dreams of a future where everyone is treated equally, without social barriers based on caste, religion, or financial status. ■



# Empowering Adivasi Migrants for a Better Tomorrow

- **Adivasis excluded from welfare schemes for 40 years**
- **DBRC secures migration certificates for all 61 families**
- **Girl child enrollment improves significantly**

**H**unger, poverty, and unemployment are the primary drivers of migration. The fact that the indigenous Adivasi (tribal) people of this country have migrated for survival and are now living as immigrants serves as strong evidence to the discrimination that has persisted for generations. These migrant survivors constantly face ongoing humiliation and hunger struggles. Their very existence as Adivasi is questioned, and they are distanced from their constitutional rights. Their forced migration disrupts their traditional way of life and often creates social turmoil.

Around 40 years ago, 61 tribal families from Devipatnam village, a suburb of Vizianagaram district, migrated to Peddapadu village in West Godavari district in search of employment. Despite residing in this village for 40 years, they lacked access to basic entitlements and government schemes. When they enquired with government officials, they were informed that a migration certificate was mandatory for accessing any government entitlement or scheme. The Adivasis informed us that they had made numerous representations to government officials, but to no avail. Left with no alternative, they were forced to send their children to work as labourers to make ends meet for their families.

Once DBRC became aware of these communities and their struggles, it began working with them. DBRC understood that Adivasis were in a highly disadvantaged situation, lacking access to any identity cards or government schemes. Child marriages and child labour were also observed within these communities. Therefore, DBRC embarked



Gosala Jhansi Rani representative of DBRC presenting a petition to **Mr. G.J.N. Kumar**, MRO, Pedapadu Mandal

on a mission to sensitise these communities about government schemes, acts, and services, while also educating them about the negative effects of child marriage and child labour.

Mrs. Jhansi from DBRC interacted with the community multiple times, instilling hope in them. Later, she, along with the community members, met the Peddapadu Mandal MRO from Eluru district and submitted a representation about the community issues. The Peddapadu Mandal MRO office verified the situation of the 61 families by collecting information and forwarding it to the Bobbili MRO in Vizianagaram District. The authorities of the two districts coordinated with each other and issued migration certificates to all 61 families.

With the migration certificates secured, DBRC helped the families navigate applications for essential government programs like ration cards and scholarships. As a result, all 61 families now enjoy the benefits of these schemes, leading to a significant decrease in child marriages and a rise in school attendance. DBRC's intervention demonstrably improved the lives of these Adivasi families. ■



Poverty, often a consequence of negative social and structural factors, can become a vicious cycle if no timely intervention is taken up. One such manifestation of poverty is rural-urban migration. This story follows 60 families, members of the Scheduled Tribe (Koya Dora) community, who migrated from Sarapale village in Khammam District five decades ago in search of a better livelihood.

Their journey took them from village to village as nomadic labourers, eventually leading them to settle in Nunna, a village on the outskirts of Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh. Initially, they lived in temporary shelters, resorting to hunting and gathering for survival. They supplemented their income by managing livestock. However, rapid urbanisation in Vijayawada posed a threat to their livestock rearing. Landowners sold their fields for development, leaving the tribal families who worked as tenant farmers jobless and without grazing land for their livestock. Forced to adapt, the men found work as wage labourers, while the women became domestic workers.

Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre (DBRC), identified these marginalised families during a community mobilisation exercise. It became evident that the Konda Dora community faced significant challenges including extreme poverty, widespread illiteracy, and limited access to education for their children.



## Journey of Sarapale Tribal Families

*A Case Study of Adivasis (Konda Dora) in City Suburbs of Vijayawada, Krishna District*

- **Rapid urbanisation hinders livelihoods of Konda Dora community**
- **Obtaining migration and caste certificates, accessing welfare schemes.**
- **Entrepreneurial training, formation of SHGs, and access to education, leading to sustainable livelihoods.**

A significant reason for their plight was their absence from government statistics, excluding them from essential benefits and schemes.

DBRC took on the challenge of integrating Konda Dora tribes into the mainstream. DBRC staff created awareness on various subjects, ranging from women's health to alternative livelihoods. All households were encouraged to apply for the migration certificates, crucial for accessing government rights and entitlements. Through DBRC's persistent efforts, every Konda Dora family was able to receive both migration and caste certificates.

With these documents, the

local government recognised the deprived tribal families, bringing them under various welfare schemes. DBRC also addressed the issue of inconsistent income among Konda Dora tribes, often due to their under-skilled labour status, leaving them to struggle for food. To ensure sustainable livelihoods, DBRC linked them with the tribal welfare department for loans and other provisions under the ST Sub-plan.

DBRC's dedication was finally acknowledged by the government, resulting in the provision of essential benefits and entitlements under the DBT component of the SC/ST sub-plan. These included:

- Migration certificates

and caste certificates for all households

- Social security pensions for most eligible individuals
- Enrolment of children in government schools with educational benefits and scholarships

Furthermore, the Tribal Welfare Department and DRDA provided entrepreneurial training for women to start their own businesses. Eleven women

received tailoring training, and 24 launched home-based tailoring units. Four women established petty shops, and three ventured into other home-based businesses.

To empower the tribal women, DBRC facilitated the formation of 11 Self Help Groups (SHGs). Currently, all 110 women in these groups are saving money and have access to loans through formal institutions. Mrs. Ramadevi, the District Coordinator of DBRC in

Vijayawada, was instrumental in providing unwavering support and encouragement to the tribal communities, thus successfully overcoming the hurdles. This story serves as a testament to the transformative power of continuous support and education. By empowering the voiceless, we were able to enable them to be active participants in their own development and build a brighter future. ■

## DBRC's Triumph over Adversity for Chenchu Families



The Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre (DBRC) made significant effort to improve the economic and social living standards of Chenchu families living in poverty, hunger, and neglected circumstances. As a result of its consistent efforts, DBRC was able to secure the completion of clay houses constructed by the government for 50 Chenchu families. These families had been residing in Maula Nagar, Gollapudi Rural Mandal near Vijayawada, for twenty years, living in precarious conditions. While construction for all 50 families began without requiring any initial financial contribution from beneficiaries, work on the houses for 32 families stalled due to the withholding of funds for doors, windows, drainage connections, and flooring, allegedly because the beneficiaries did not pay their share.

DBRC intervened by advocating with the authorities on two fronts. Firstly, they brought it to the notice of concerned officials that the Chenchu families were exempt from such contributions according to the

- DBRC plays active role in enrolling children in Anganwadis
- Facilitates in getting Aadhar, voter and ration cards
- Advocacy results in construction of houses for Chenchus

government regulations. Secondly, they brought the matter to the attention of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Due to DBRC's intervention, the construction of the houses was completed by the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation.

Furthermore, DBRC facilitated the acquisition of essential documents for the Chenchu families, including Aadhaar cards, ration cards, and voter cards. DBRC played an active role in registering four Dwacra groups (Self-Help Groups) and enrolling all the children from Chenchu families in schools and Anganwadi centres. ■



# Overcoming Obstacles

- **Erukula woman with a mental health condition brutally assaulted**
- **DBRC supports victim's aunt in filing SC/ST atrocity case**
- **DBRC secures justice for the woman**

An incident in Guntur district exemplifies the depraved behaviour of some men who view women as mere sexual objects and commit acts of rape and assault with impunity. Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre (DBRC) played a pivotal role in securing legal action against two men accused of raping woman with a mental health condition belonging to the Erukula caste. DBRC not only stood by the victim's side and provided support throughout the ordeal but also ensured she received compensation from the government.

The victim, a 27-year-old woman with a mental health condition from the Erukula caste, lost her parents at the age of six. She was raised by her aunt, Sitamma (name changed), in Ramanadhapuram village, Guntur district. Due to extreme poverty, Sharada (name changed) was forced to beg for a living from a young age.

In January 2018, Krishnaiah (40) (name changed) and Laxmaiah (30) (name changed), both belonging to the Other Backward Class (OBC) and dominant caste, approached Sharada while she was begging in the village. They lured her into a secluded wooded area with the promise of biscuits and then brutally raped her one after the other.

As darkness fell, Sitamma began searching for her niece Sharada, who had not yet returned home. The villagers, alerted by a woman's cries coming from the trees on the village outskirts, rushed to the location like. The perpetrators fled the scene, leaving Sharada in a distressed state. Unable to communicate the ordeal, Sitamma and the villagers immediately took her to the nearby police station. The Sub-Inspector promptly registered a First Information Report (FIR)

and sent Sharada to Guntur Government Hospital for a medical examination.

Upon receiving information about the incident, Mr. Chinnappa, DBRC's regional coordinator, visited the village, met with the elders, and ensured a FIR was registered under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) – Section 376(D) for gangrape, Section 376(2) (1) for rape of a woman suffering from a mental disability, and Section 3(2)(v) of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. He also urged the authorities to swiftly apprehend and punish the culprits.

The Deputy Superintendent of Police in Sattenapalli, Mr. Khaleshawali, initiated an investigation on the following day (18th January 2018). DBRC representatives persistently advocated for the immediate arrest of the accused. The arrests were made on 21st January 2018, and the men were presented in court on 22nd January 2018. The case is currently before the court.

DBRC ensured cooperation from the Village Revenue Officer (VRO) and Mandal Revenue Officer (MRO) during the investigation. The VRO prepared a detailed report of the incident, which was then certified by the MRO and forwarded to the District Collector's office. Additionally, DBRC's tireless efforts resulted in securing financial aid of Rs. 5 lakhs for Sharada from the government. ■



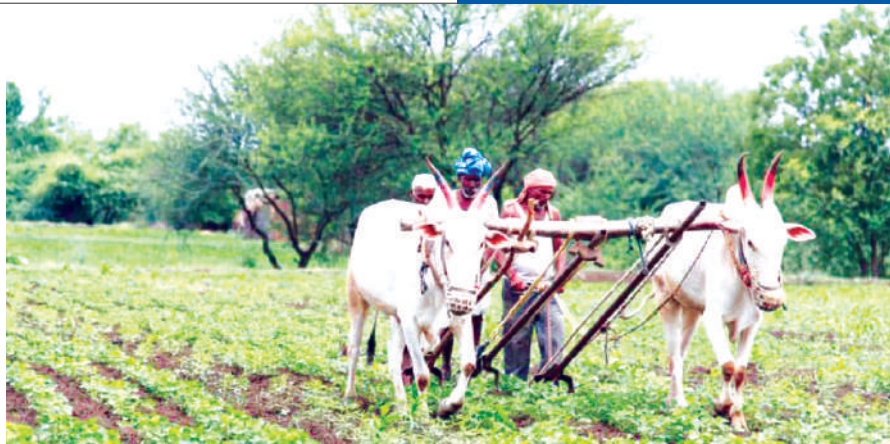
# From Toiling Tenants to Empowered Landowners: A Story of Transformation

- Struggling Dalit tenant farmers seek support
- DBRC empowers farmers with rights and resources
- Intervention brings a new light to Dalit tenant farmers' lives

In Viparlapalem village of Prakasam district, majority of the SCs are tenant farmers. Landless and struggling, they toiled as agricultural labourers, their dreams often withering like the crops they tended. Among them, 15 households shared a unique burden – they had been cultivating 51 acres of endowment land belonging to the Rama Lingeswara temple and Sangameswara temple in neighbouring villages. Yet, they lacked the recognition and entitlements that would make them eligible for essential agricultural welfare schemes.

Through interactions with the SC tenant farmers, Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre (DBRC) learned about the struggles of these tenant farmers and resolved to intervene and support these communities. DBRC team visited the homes of the SC tenant farmers, interacted with them, identified areas of concern, and, more importantly, educated the farmers about their rights and the government schemes that could transform their fortunes. The initial steps were taken to raise awareness among the community, infusing them with a sense of hope and purpose.

In the process, DBRC facilitated the application process for Crop Cultivator Rights Cards



(CCRC cards), a document that would mark the tenant farmers as legitimate cultivators. Under the Andhra Pradesh Crop Cultivator Rights Act 2019, these cards held immense significance. Finally, the SC tenant farmers possessed the documentation they required to access vital government support.

In July 2019, DBRC approached the Commissioner of Endowments, Government of Andhra Pradesh, and negotiated the allocation of the fifty-one acres of temple land to the fifteen SC households from Viparlapalem. The Commissioner recognised the seriousness of the issue and took action, directing the authorities to issue the lands accordingly.

With their CCRC cards in hand, the tenant farmers are now entitled to “Raithu Bharosa” scheme, a lifeline of financial support. Each farmer received

Rs.9,000, disbursed in two separate instalments. This support was not merely monetary; it had a newfound sense of security, enabling them to invest in quality inputs and services for higher crop productivity.

Land, once a distant dream, now more than just a source of income. It was an instrument that bestowed respect upon the tenant farmers and improved their socioeconomic status as a community. With their rights acknowledged and the support they needed, they began to flourish. The transformation was remarkable. This intervention by DBRC empowered these communities to stand up for their rights and transform their lives. This intervention is not just about cards and land, but about dignity, empowerment, and hope.



# Reclaiming Traditional Livelihoods through Fishing Licenses for Chenchus and Yanadis

- Chenchus and Yanadis lacked necessary permits
- DBRC Intervenes to Secure Fishing Rights
- Action leads to financial independence of Chenchus and Yanadis



Yanadis of Milk factory and YSR colonies receiving Identity Cards and fishing licences from Officials of Fisheries Department in Vijayawada.

For generations, the Chenchus and Yanadis have been expert fishermen, using traditional techniques passed down through their families to cast nets and catch fish from the local rivers. However, their lives took a difficult turn over the last 40 years because they lacked the necessary permits, such as fishing licences. Without these licences, they were unable to legally pursue their fishing activities, often leading to conflicts with other villagers who claimed exclusive fishing rights in their areas.

Responding to this challenging situation, Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre (DBRC) stepped in to help. DBRC recognized the significance of the Chenchu and Yanadi communities' traditional livelihoods and the need to find a resolution to their ongoing struggles. In the hilly and canal-side regions of Vijayawada, 110 families from these communities heavily relied on fishing as their primary source of income. DBRC understood the importance of this traditional way of life and decided to take action. The team of DBRC and the community members met the District Collector and requested support and assistance for these fishermen.

The District Collector, understanding the urgency of the situation, responded promptly. He directed the fisheries department to thoroughly investigate the issue and come up with a suitable solution. This was a crucial step in addressing the problem at its root. With persistent advocacy and continued efforts on behalf of the fishermen, a significant breakthrough was achieved. The government eventually granted fishing licenses and ID cards to 79 of the families, legally allowing them to fish. This development marked a turning point in the lives of the Chenchus and Yanadis, who had previously struggled with poverty and conflicts. Now, they could pursue their traditional fishing activities without any disputes, improving their standard of living. The availability of licences and ID cards resolved the objections raised by other villagers, fostering a more harmonious coexistence. Additionally, it provided the Chenchus and Yanadis with newfound confidence and financial independence. They no longer had to worry about the legality of their fishing, and this had a profound impact on their lives and the well-being of their communities.

In summary, the DBRC played a vital role in addressing the long-standing issue of fishing licences for the Yanadis and Chenchus in Vijayawada. Their efforts uplifted these communities and provided hope for a brighter future as they continued their traditional fishing practices, now legally and without conflict. ■



# Rags to Books

**D**umping yard is around 15 km away from Guntur and all the waste collected at source in Guntur is being dumped in the 73 acres dumping yard. Different types of waste

ie. Plastic, cardboard, glass, iron and wet waste is being dumped here.

DBRC started its intervention with waste pickers from this dumping yard in 2016. Around 33 families belonging to Yanadi Communities have setup their make shift tents made with banners, tarpaulins, sarees etc and living with their families in the most unhygienic conditions and without any basic facilities. It is an inhospitable place where only insects and bacteria can be found, accumulating on the dry, sun-drenched, and stinking hills. All the people living here are non-literate and have not accessed any schemes and services from the government.

Seeking to bring the change in the living conditions of these communities, our team visited these areas, interacted with the communities, and conducted a study to understand the socio-economic conditions of waste pickers. We found that these communities do not have access to drinking water, electricity, housing, and lack access to Aadhar cards, ration cards, and caste certificates. The children of these communities do not attend school but rather go along with their parents to collect waste. We have organized several awareness programs to sensitize them about the importance of education. We have decided to take steps to ensure that the children who have never joined school or the drop-out children are enrolled in school.

As a first step, we started summer camps where the children were encouraged to sing, dance, draw, act, and play. It started with 8 children, but in just 15 days, 23 children started participating in the summer camps. We have appointed a teacher to train the children in basic alphabet, numbers, good habits, etc. The children were provided with toothpaste, a toothbrush, coconut oil, a comb, a mirror, soaps, and powder, etc., and encouraged to use them regularly to stay clean and healthy. After 2 months of summer camp training, the children were encouraged to join in government school and only 13 out of 23 expressed their willingness to get enrolled in school. The rest of them did not want to join school as it was around 4 kms away from their place of residence. After joining them in the school, the headmistress informed us that as the children did not have Aadhar cards, it was not possible to provide mid-day meals, uniforms, and books.

We took the children to the Aadhar centres, but as they didn't have documents to get aadhar cards, it has become very hard for them to

- **Children engaged in waste picking**
- **DBRC motivated the community**
- **Our advocacy led to establishment of govt. school**

get aadhar. So, we spoke with the MRO and got notarization done, and then we applied for aadhar cards, resulting in all 13 children obtaining them. We facilitated them in applying for Aadhar cards, and all of them received Aadhar cards. As the school was faraway we observed dropouts. So, we organized an auto to take the children to school and bring them back home. We have observed some changes in these children; however, it remains challenging for them to attend school regularly.

We advocated with the District Collector to establish a school in the area. After three months of consistent follow-up, the government allocated a government teacher to teach the students. The children now receive free books, uniforms, shoes, and a mid-day meal. As a result, they are attending school regularly. As days went by, it has become hard for 1 teacher, so we met the collector and requested to appoint additional teacher and he allotted a second teacher. 35 children from families engaged in waste picking and daily wage labor, belonging to Scheduled Caste(SC), Scheduled Tribe(ST), and Denotified communities, are now attending school regularly.

DBRC's efforts to break the cycle of generational illiteracy and empower children from marginalized communities by providing access to education and fostering hope for a brighter future have taken a positive turn.





# Restoring Lives

- Cyclone Titli devastates coastal communities of Andhra Pradesh
- DBRC conducts needs assessments for targeted and effective intervention
- Distributes essential supplies and promotes WASH practices in the community

The Indian coastline is highly vulnerable to tropical cyclones, which can have a devastating impact on the inland environment. The east coast is particularly susceptible as the Bay of Bengal is a fertile ground for the formation of tropical cyclones. One such

cyclone, named 'Titli' made landfall on 11<sup>th</sup> October, 2018 causing catastrophic effects on the coastal districts of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, and Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.

This disaster resulted in the loss of eleven lives and directly affected approximately one million people residing in Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts. Strong winds reaching speeds of 130-140 kilometres per hour, coupled with a storm surge, caused subsequent flooding and extensive damage in more than 1,297 villages. The transportation system and power supply across the three districts was severely impacted, leading to power outages, lack of clean drinking water, and the unavailability of essential commodities, non-food items (NFIs), and emergency shelter supplies.

This situation not only exposed the limitations of the existing disaster management system but also highlighted the need for building sustainable and resilient systems to confront such natural disasters. The cyclone resulted in the loss of life, extensive damage to public and private properties, and livestock deaths. There was widespread destruction of agricultural and horticultural crops, animal husbandry, and fisheries. Additionally, numerous houses were either marooned, inundated, or damaged, affecting the livelihoods of the people.

DBRC conducted a thorough assessment of the damage inflicted upon the highly affected areas, primarily inhabited by tribal communities. This assessment was a crucial precursor to ensure that the intervention would be targeted and effective. The evaluation involved extensive interactions with government officials and the affected communities to gain an in-depth understanding of their needs, challenges, and priorities.

With a comprehensive understanding of the local context and the specific needs of the communities, DBRC initiated its Cyclone Relief work in Kothuru Mandal of Srikakulam District and Kurupam Mandal of Vizianagaram District. Collaboration with the START Fund and Christian Aid made this intervention possible, underscoring the importance of collective efforts in times of crisis.

DBRC identified people affected by the disaster and prepared beneficiary lists for the provision

of relief materials. Beneficiary cards were issued to selected individuals. The communities were sensitised about WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) practices and low-cost nutrition options. The objective was to enhance the overall well-being and resilience of these communities by addressing crucial elements of their daily lives, including access to clean water, improved sanitation facilities, and hygiene education.

DBRC distributed Non-Food Items (NFIs) and hygiene kits to 2,200 families affected by cyclone. These kits included items such as tarpaulin top sheets, ground sheets, blankets, bedsheets, towels, cotton rolls, plastic bucket lids, mugs, plastic combs, mirrors, soap boxes, toothbrushes, toothpaste, washing powder, antiseptic liquid, sanitary napkins, mosquito nets, and sewing kits. Subsequently, a DBRC team conducted post-distribution monitoring (PDM) by interviewing families to verify the receipt and utilisation of NFIs and hygiene kits. This process also helped them assess the overall effectiveness of the distribution process and identify areas for improvement in future interventions.

DBRC's intervention, including the distribution of essential items and hygiene education, provided critical support and has continued to improve the resilience of cyclone-affected communities. This initiative empowered the community to restore their lives with enhanced access to resources and improved sanitation practices. ■



*I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved.*

**- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**



## Empowering Lives: DBRC's Impactful Initiatives in Chigurupadu



- Limited amenities hinder Madiga community's well-being
- New Anganwadi centre started
- Facilitates construction of concrete roads

In Chigurupadu, a village of Atchampet mandal in Andhra Pradesh's Guntur district, approximately 150 families belonging to the SC Madiga community have resided for many years. Traditionally, these families have relied on agriculture for their livelihoods. However, the area lacked essential amenities, hindering their overall well-being.

Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre (DBRC) intervened to address these pressing issues. Mr. Mallela Chinnappa, the DBRC representative, organised a series of meetings with the colony's residents and identified that the local Anganwadi centre was being operated in a rented building without basic facilities.

DBRC submitted a memorandum to the District Collector, the local legislator, and the Child Development Project Officer (CDPO), urging them to take action in constructing a new Anganwadi building.

Through DBRC's persistent follow-ups, the Government sanctioned Rs. 7 lakhs for the construction of a new Anganwadi Centre. Additionally, DBRC submitted another memorandum to the Mandal Parishad Development Officer (MPDO) advocating for the construction of concrete roads in the colony. The district collector subsequently allotted Rs. 7 lakhs for the construction of roads in the colony. Funds were sanctioned from the SC/ST sub-plan, specifically designated for the development of Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities.



DBRC's intervention has successfully resolved the challenges regarding the Anganwadi centre and concrete roads. The community members have expressed their happiness with the improved infrastructure. As a result, children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers are now able to fully utilise the services offered by the Anganwadi Centre. ■

# Flowing Forward: DBRC's Clean Water Mission in Thaduvai



- **Identifying challenges in Thaduvai village**
- **Advocating for access to clean water**
- **Collaborative solutions and positive impact**

Villages are the backbone of the country, and they are crucial in managing resources, conserving the environment, and balancing demographics, all vital for the nation's prosperity and well-being.

Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre (DBRC) actively engaged with the Thaduvai village community in Guntur district, recognizing the challenges faced by predominantly SC families primarily engaged as agricultural labourers and often landless. Mr. Mallela Chinnappa from DBRC collaborated closely with the villagers, understanding their hardships.

DBRC's representative Mr. Chinnappa found that lack of access to clean drinking water is one of the major problems of the community, which significantly hindered the daily activities of the community. DBRC team, with the support of the community, has taken up the issue to local authorities, including the MPDO, Panchayat Office, and the district collector, seeking solutions.

To address this, DBRC advocated for the construction of a pipeline from the Krishna River to the village and also oversaw the installation of a filtration system. This crucial intervention brought clean water to the Anganwadi Centre and the government school, significantly improving the community's living conditions.

Previously, villagers had to travel a long way to get clean drinking water, impacting their routines and even the education of children and now due to the intervention of DBRC, this lessened the burden, directly enhancing the well-being of the village.

The DBRC's collaboration with the local authorities showcases the impact of collective efforts in addressing crucial challenges in rural areas, demonstrating the power of community organizations like DBRC in making tangible and positive changes. ■



# Building a Future of Yanadi's in Budampadu Village



DBRC representatives submitting a representation to the Chairman of ST Commission Mr. Kumbha Ravi Babu

- Yanadis lack basic amenities
- DBRC intervenes to bring change
- Interventions enhance access to entitlements and jobs

For two decades, approximately 80 Yanadi families in Budampadu village grappled with inadequate housing, lack of access to clean water, and poor sanitation facilities. These circumstances significantly impacted the educational prospects of the younger generation. Leaky homes during the monsoon season not only posed safety hazards but also disrupted their studies.

Recognizing these challenges, DBRC focused on bringing change to the community. The team identified 15 children in need of enrollment in government schools and facilitated their admission. An additional 10 children were placed in hostels to provide a safe and conducive learning environment. For younger children (aged 3-6 years), DBRC ensured the enrollment of 15 more in Anganwadicenters, which offer pre-school education and subsidized meals.

Understanding the limitations of traditional schooling methods in meeting the community's specific needs, DBRC started an outdoor learning center. This provided a stimulating and culturally relevant learning space, potentially incorporating interactive activities and local knowledge alongside the mainstream curriculum. This initiative aimed to bridge the educational gap between these children and others and improve learning outcomes.

DBRC's interventions yielded positive results. School dropouts saw a significant reduction, and the outdoor learning centers became vibrant hubs of learning and joy. This shift extended beyond education, with a gradual cultural change emphasizing the importance of cleanliness and safety within the community.

Realizing the need to provide access to essential documents like Aadhar cards, ration cards, caste verification documents, and e-SHRAM cards for the empowerment of the Yanadi community, DBRC facilitated in getting required documents. These documents not only ensure access to government benefits and schemes but also establish identity and open doors to employment opportunities.



DBRC representatives following up on the development activities in Budampaadu village

DBRC facilitated the acquisition of these documents for 70 individuals with e-SHRAM cards, 25 with Aadhar cards, 15 families with ration cards, and 35 with caste certificates, helping combat child labor and child marriages. With newfound confidence and access to government benefits, parents were more inclined to prioritize education for their children.

In November 2022, DBRC advocated with Sri. Kumbha Ravi Babu, the Chairperson of the State ST Commission. This meeting resulted in a directive to local authorities to address the core infrastructure

issues in the village. The focus was on providing water connections, repairing houses, and initiating the registration process to formally recognize the ownership of Yanadi community homes.

The Yanadi community in Budampadu village is immensely grateful to DBRC for not only addressing their immediate needs but also for fostering a renewed sense of hope and progress. Through their multifaceted approach encompassing education, securing entitlements, and advocating for the community's well-being. ■

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## Prevented Underage Marriage: A Path to Healthy Life

**A**dipudi Hepsy Papa, currently 19 years old, was raised by her maternal grandparents in Yedlalingayya colony, Tenali, and had been involved in waste picking since childhood. She met her fellow waste picker Yesanna when she was 17 year old and both fell in love. Both developed a deep connection and decided to seek consent from their respective elders and close relatives for their wedding. Given that Yesanna was a distant relative of Hepsy's family, their relatives readily agreed to their marriage.

When the wedding plans of Hepsy came to the attention of Mr. Bandela Ramesh, a DBRC staff member, community members informed him that Hepsy was still a minor by that time. In response, Mr. Ramesh conducted a meeting with all waste-picking community members, educated them on the adverse effects of early marriages, including health complications for the girl/woman during childbirth and the lack of necessary skills to care for a new-born child.

Understanding the legal consequences of early marriages, family and community leaders agreed to postpone Hepsy's wedding until she reaches the legal age of marriage. After adhering to the agreement, Hepsy and Yesanna married following the two-year waiting period, promptly notifying Mr. Ramesh of their union.

DBRC continued its support by assisting Hepsy's family in obtaining Aadhar cards, ration card, caste certificate and facilitated them in applying for various schemes of the government, Hepsy, now committed to making informed choices, pledged not to marry off her child before reaching adulthood and promised to encourage her child to pursue education diligently. As a gesture of further support, DBRC provided them with a three-wheeler cycle, enabling them to earn additional income and enhancing their overall well-being. ■







## Strengthened Livelihoods of SC ST Fisherfolk

- Fishing rights denied
- Empowering through education and advocacy
- Addressing economic challenges and building collective strength

In the coastal villages of Andanki and Talluru in Prakasam District, Andhra Pradesh, daily life closely followed the patterns set by the nearby sea. Fishing, a lifeline for Dalits and Adivasis residing in these areas, was more than just an occupation; it was a way of life. However, the shadows of discrimination loomed large as the dominant castes, holding sway over the fishing grounds, denied access to the SC (Mala) and ST (Yanadis) communities.

DBRC understood the difficult situations faced by marginalized communities. The dominant caste, having fishing licenses from the fishery department, used their power to control others. Whenever Dalit (SC) and Adivasi (ST) individuals, who didn't have these licenses, tried to fish in those areas, they faced serious consequences.

The SC and ST villagers, though aware of their rights, hesitated to voice out. The team of DBRC kept visiting them frequently and sensitizing SC, STs about available government schemes and services. After five visits, people started understanding our work and started expressing their issues.

We, along with the community members approached the fishery department, lodging grievances with the Joint Director of Fisheries, the Collector, and the local MLA. Then they were asked to provide aadhar and caste certificate to get

fishing license. Then, our team undertook the task of facilitating these essential documents through various initiatives.

In the villages, a camp was set up with the government's support. After some effort, 30 people from Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) received caste certificates and Aadhar cards. It wasn't just about the paperwork; it was a spark of hope that ignited within them.

But, DBRC knew money was also a big problem. So, they went beyond giving out documents. They advocated with the fisheries department and could facilitate them in getting new bicycles worth Rs 15,000 each, making it much easier for people to get around and go about their daily lives. They even built a structure - a platform specifically designed for drying fish. This made their work much more efficient.

The fishing licenses and ID cards transformed from just pieces of paper into symbols of triumph over tough times. The bicycles didn't just carry people; they carried the weight of their struggles and their determination to overcome them. And the drying platform wasn't just a place for fish; it became a testament to the strength that blossomed when the community joined forces.

The transformation of the waste pickers' lives in Guntur city is a testament to the power of consistent Advocacy with the government. The support of the municipal corporation has paved way for 230 waste pickers now they have better job security, working conditions, and respect for their profession.

DBRC remains committed to creating a brighter future for all and will continue to work towards building a equitable and inclusive society. ■

Owning a piece of land remains a distant dream for many Dalits in Telangana state. All they know is toil under the scorching sun from morning to evening. Dalits have endured social and economic exploitation for generations. The haunting question persists: will this scenario change, at least in our times?

To shatter this age-old traditional system and transform Dalits from laborers into landowners, DBRC initiated an awareness campaign and has assisted hundreds of farmers in Siddipeta District, Telangana, in realizing their dreams.

DBRC has been working for the socio-economic development of Dalit families in 25 villages in Mirdoddi, Dubbaka, and Siddipeta Mandals of Siddipeta district. The efforts have contributed for successfully transitioned the lives of landless Dalit labourers into landowning farmers. The government distributed 75 acres of land to women from Kasulabad, Laxminagar, Chintanuduka, Bimstapur, Ibrahimpur, Habsipur, Acchunuiyapalle, Rudraram, and Chikodu villages. From 2014 to the present, 347 families have received land from the government, with each family allocated three acres, totalling 824.39 acres of land.

DBRC played a pivotal role in raising awareness among local women farmers about the Land Purchase Scheme (LPS) at

### Seeds of Change:

## Dalit Women Farmers' Journey to Land Ownership and Agricultural Prosperity in Telangana

- Majority of the Dalits are landless agricultural labourers
- Empowering Dalit Women Farmers
- Promoted profit-making crop harvest
- Introduced Sustainable Agriculture in Siddipeta

village level. Consequently, land has been registered in the names of women farmers. In the allotted lands, women farmers predominantly cultivated rainfed crops such as maize and lentils. In this context, DBRC staff conducted awareness campaigns on modern cultivation methods, efficient fertilizer and seed utilization, the procedure for availing 100 percent subsidies, and enhancing crop productivity with minimal water resources.

DBRC encouraged women farmers to shift towards cultivating profit-yielding vegetable crops instead of traditional practices. Some Dalit women farmers were taken to field sites where modern agrarian practices are followed. In collaboration with Mandal and District authorities, DBRC organized awareness campaigns for Dalit women farmers and provided them with different vegetable seeds free of cost.

Similarly, DBRC staff met

with SC Corporation authorities and grievance cell members on multiple occasions, urging them to provide water facilities to all Dalit women farmers who lacked any water sources for land cultivation. DBRC staff invited government authorities to visit the fields so that they could hear the problems of women farmers directly. As a result, 24 water pumping bores out of a total of 156 bore pumps were sanctioned in DBRC working areas. The government allocated Rs. 50,000 in financial aid for each of the 24 bore pumps. DBRC facilitated 40 women farmers in obtaining electricity connections by paying Rs. 30,000 through demand drafts. Through SC Corporation, Rs. 5,000 was sanctioned for each electricity connection, totalling two lakh rupees. Electricity connections, including poles, wires, and transformers, were subsequently approved for Dalit women farmers.

In 2014-15, Telangana state Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao distributed 9 acres of land to three Dalit families in Chintamadaka village. Although three bores were drilled, they failed to connect them to electric motors. Similarly, in Ibrahimpur, a village adopted by Telangana Finance Minister T Harish Rao, government officials overlooked connecting electric motors to four bores drilled on land distributed

by the minister to the villagers.

DBRC has diligently worked to secure electric motors for drilled bores on all lands distributed to Dalits in the district. Accompanied by SC women farmers, DBRC met SC Corporation authorities to bring these issues to their attention. In addition, DBRC Coordinator P. Shankar highlighted this issue in SC/ST vigilance committee meetings.

Through consistent representation, DBRC exerted pressure on district and state authorities, as well as on the MP and MLA of the constituency, and succeeded in achieving their goals. As a result, Rs. 68,79,600 was sanctioned for 75 electric motors across the district. Dalit women farmers of Narmeta village, Nunganoor-Mandal, and KondapakaMandal praised the efforts of DBRC. ■

## Breaking Chains of Injustice

- **Dalit man arrested illegally and brutally assaulted**
- **DBRC conducts a fact finding and advocates with district authorities**
- **Both accused and police face consequences**

In Vempadu Village of Mundlamuru Mandal in Prakasam District, Mr. Bodapati Veeraiah belonging to the dominant caste filed a case against Mr. Ramesh, a person belonging to the scheduled caste community from the same village. The police immediately arrested Ramesh, hit him, and abused him because he is a Dalit and there was no one to support him.

Upon learning about the case, DBRC head office asked the community mobilizer, Mr. Venkatarao, to go to the village and conduct a fact-finding investigation. Mr. Venkata Rao went to Mundlamuru Police Station and inquired about the case filed against Ramesh. He learned that a case was filed based on the complaint of Mr. Veeraiah, who claimed that Ramesh borrowed Rs. 20,000 and did not repay the money.

To conduct the fact-finding investigation, Mr. Venkatrao visited the village and inquired with the neighbors about Ramesh and his nature. He learned that Ramesh is a good person and has not borrowed any money from Mr. Veeraiah. Veeraiah is falsely framing Ramesh because he is from a Scheduled

caste community. When he inquired with others in the village, around ten of them also said that Veeraiah had been filing false cases against Ramesh because he is a Dalit.

Immediately, Mr. Venkatrao of DBRC went to Mundlamuru Police Station and interacted with the SI of Police. He asked if there was any evidence of borrowing, i.e., any proof of note, for which the SI mentioned that there was no such evidence. Mr. Venkatrao met with the district superintendent of Police and complained to him about the illegal arrest of Mr. Ramesh. He also informed him that Ramesh was tortured, and beaten up black and blue without any evidence.

The District Superintendent responded immediately, investigated the case, confirmed that it was an illegal case, and released Ramesh. At the same time, the Sub-Inspector was suspended, and Veeraiah, who had filed the false case, was arrested.

All Dalits in the village thanked DBRC for ensuring justice in this case. ■



## Reclaiming Dignity:

# The Land Struggles of a Dalit Farmer in Pamidipadu Village

- Dalit farmer fights for land rights
- Farm land illegally encroached by neighbouring farmer
- DBRC assists in reclaiming the land

The land is not just crop land; it is self-assurance, respect, social status, and ensures economic security for generations. Such land was held hostage by some in this country. The story of Dasari Venkateshwarlu, a Dalit farmer who reclaimed his land with the help of Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre (DBRC), serves as an inspiration to others facing similar situations.

The average landholding of Scheduled Castes in Andhra Pradesh is only 0.5 acres, illustrating how Dalits have been excluded from having own land for centuries, despite it being the primary means of creating wealth. Even those who own small piece of land often face challenges from socially dominant neighbouring castes and struggle to cultivate their land. Small and marginalized farmers from Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) experience immense suffering and distress when trying to protect their land. Venkateshwarlu and his father Venkataswamy, belongs to SC Mala caste and make a living through cultivating their hilly land and working as daily wage labourers.

In 1970, the government distributed 70 acres of land in Pamidipada village to 80 Dalit farmer families, including Dasari Venkataswamy family. They relied on cultivating the land to make a living. However, due to a famine in the village, Venkataswamy and some other Dalit families faced severe poverty for several years. In order to survive, they migrated to Medarametla village in search of livelihoods. As they left Pamidipadu, they leased their land to another farmer in the same village. A few years prior to this, Dasari Venkataswamy had laid a borewell on the farm as part of a comprehensive land development program called 'Indira Jalaprabha.' This program also helped set up clear boundaries for everyone's land.

After the death of his father, Dasari Venkateshwarlu went to check on his farm in Pamidipadu village. To his dismay, he found that the farm had been encroached by a neighbouring farmer, P. Subba Rao. This was a devastating blow to Venkateshwarlu and his family, as the farm was their main source of livelihood. They were determined to fight for their rights to get their land back.

Despite several failed attempts to retrieve his land, Dasari Venkateshwarlu did not lose hope and continued to fight for his right on land. He approached the caste panchayat of the village multiple times, but Subbarao's illegal occupation persisted with the support of the village sarpanch. Eventually, Venkateshwarlu's plight came to the attention of Darla Koteswar Rao, of Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre (DBRC) in Prakasam District.

Darla Koteswara Rao assisted Dasari Venkateshwarlu to file an RTI to ascertain the status of his land records. Subsequent investigations revealed that Venkateshwarlu was indeed the rightful owner of the land. In response, a case was filed at the Revenue Division Office under Act 9/77, which facilitates immediate land registration and transfer to the rightful owner when individuals unlawfully occupy land.

The Revenue Divisional Officer acted swiftly, urging the Revenue inspector to collaborate with the Village Revenue Officer in investigating the case. As a result, Subbarao and the village sarpanch were compelled to vacate the land. The village Tahsildar then dispatched a land surveyor to define the farm boundaries and officially transfer the land to Venkateshwarlu. Throughout this process, DBRC representative extended unwavering support to Venkateshwarlu to reclaim his land successfully. ■

# Resilience and Empowerment of Yanadis in Vaddeswaram Village

- Waste picker's makeshift tents were demolished
- DBRC efforts lead to house site allotment
- Never enrolled children are now in schools

In the heart of Andhra Pradesh's Vaddeswaram village, a resilient community of waste pickers, about 35 families from scheduled tribes have been living there for over a decade. These families eked out their livelihoods by collecting plastic, paper, cardboard, iron, and other recyclables from the streets, dumping yards, and other areas. Despite their hard work, they faced numerous challenges, living in makeshift tents beside the railway tracks without access to electricity or drinking water.

Their lives took a sudden turn when a group of individuals, along with two JCBs, arrived and demolished two of their homes. They claimed the land belonged to a landlord, prompting the waste-picking community to vacate the area they had called home for so long. News reached the Dalit Bahujan Resource Center (DBRC), and the team of DBRC rushed to the scene to meet with the Mandal Revenue Officer (MRO). They informed the MRO about the dire situation and urgently requested land for the displaced communities to live on.

In response, the MRO allocated approximately 2 acres of land on the other side of the railway track. However, this land was overgrown with bushes, littered with stones, and uneven. The DBRC team, alongside the waste pickers, worked tirelessly to cut down the bushy trees, clear the stones, and prepare the land for setting up their new homes. However, even before land was secured, the DBRC recognized the immediate needs of the waste-picking families. DBRC went the extra mile to facilitate the waste pickers in obtaining essential documents such as

Aadhar cards, ration cards, and caste certificates. These documents not only provided recognition but also opened doors to government entitlements that were previously out of reach.

Furthermore, DBRC made it a priority to enroll the children of these families in schools and anganwadi centers. This initiative to enrol children in schools is a game-changer for a community where child labor and child marriages had been pressing issues. Through consistent awareness and sensitization efforts led by the DBRC, a remarkable transformation took place. Child labor and child marriages became less prevalent as families began to understand the importance of education for their children. The children were no longer deprived of their right to learn, and instead, they found hope and opportunity in the classroom. Notably, the community, previously reliant on home deliveries for healthcare, embraced change due to consistent awareness and sensitization efforts. They began seeking medical treatment at government hospitals, marking a significant improvement in their healthcare access. This comprehensive support and empowerment, including obtaining entitlements, enrolling children in schools, and raising awareness about child labor and child marriages, have had a profoundly positive impact on the lives of the waste pickers and their families. It's a testament to the DBRC's unwavering commitment to making a meaningful change in the lives of marginalized communities. ■

## From Crisis to Strength: How Support Rebuilt a Family Facing Sudden Illness

- Breadwinners illness shutters the family's livelihood
- Small financial aid renewed the hope of a DNT women

It has been nearly two decades that KundaraTirupatamma and her husband KundaraKoteswar Rao have been living in Peddapalakaruru village of Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh. They reside in a makeshift tent constructed from banners, sarees, and other materials on land owned by a landlord, paying a monthly rent of Rs. 1000/-.

Koteswar Rao, the family's breadwinner runs a petty shop in the village stocked with groceries, chocolates, and sundries, striving to meet their needs and secure their future. After his first wife passed away, Koteswar Rao was left with three sons. Later, he married Tirupatamma, with whom he has a daughter. Regrettably, their sons haven't offered much support.

Their journey took a harrowing turn when Koteswar Rao fell ill with stomach problems, which subsequently led to his paralysis four months ago. The burden of medical expenses, totalling approximately Rs. 50,000 with a 2% interest rate, weighed heavily on their shoulders. Forced to



suspend operations at their shop for the past four months, they found themselves in dire financial straits.

In their time of need, Tirupatamma sought assistance from DBRC. Approaching a representative, she requested support to revive their small shop. DBRC responded with compassion, providing essential groceries and materials to help restart their business. Empowered by this assistance, Tirupatamma wasted no time in revitalizing their shop. With renewed determination, she stands beside her husband, she thanked DBRC for its unwavering support during their darkest days. Today, their shop thrives once again, earning an average daily income of Rs. 400—a testament to their resilience and the transformative power of community support.

We understand that by providing vital support to Kundara Tirupatamma and Kundara Koteswar Rao during their time of need, we not only helped them revitalize their livelihood but also inspired others. This demonstrates that even small gestures can ignite hope and drive change. ■



# Adversity to Success: Yadamma's Journey



- Collaborative efforts for economic empowerment
- Overcoming obstacles in accessing resources
- From loan approval to sustainable business growth

**Mrs. Yadamma Darla**, a resident of Peddavullagallu village in Mundlamuru mandal, Prakasam district, Andhra Pradesh, has lived there with her husband and three children for over 10 years. Yadamma earned her livelihood by selling badam milk, lemon water, and soda. Despite her hard work, she typically earned around Rs. 500 per day, insufficient to meet her family's needs, especially considering the stiff competition from 70 other vendors in the area.

Feeling disheartened and struggling to support her family, including her children's education, Yadamma seized an opportunity in 2021. The DBRC organized training sessions to educate the youth about various state and central government schemes for entrepreneurship. She attended one of these meetings, where government officials explained available opportunities and schemes.

Inspired by the possibilities, Yadamma approached DBRC representative seeking support to obtain financial assistance from the government to start an ice cream manufacturing unit. DBRC facilitated the development of a Detailed Project Report (DPR) and submitted it to the district industrial department. However, she faced obstacles when banks hesitated to provide a loan due to concerns about her ability to repay it as she belonged to a marginalized community.

Then, Yadamma, along with DBRC staff, represented this issue to the Project Manager of DRDA. The Project Manager then intervened and persuaded the district lead bank manager to support Yadamma. The district lead bank manager has requested the canara bank to provide loan as the district collector is also very much concerned about the same. Eventually, Canara Bank approved a loan of Rs. 10,80,000, with a subsidy of Rs. 3,50,000.

Although relieved to receive the loan with a subsidy, Yadamma encountered another hurdle when she needed a mini transformer for her ice cream manufacturing unit. After five months of advocacy, during which she paid Rs. 54,200 via demand draft to the electricity department, the transformer installation remained pending. Upon representing the issue to the PD of DRDA. Hence, their interventions led to the installation of the transformer by the District Electricity Officer of Transco.

Then, Yadamma, purchased the machinery needed to start the business. But, she lacked resources to purchase materials for the ice cream unit. The DBRC representative facilitated her application for a loan from the Unnati Scheme, securing Rs. 3,00,000 without interest. Now, as her business gradually gains momentum, she earns around Rs. 3,000 per day. Yadamma diligently pays Rs. 17,386

to the bank and Rs. 5,000 to Unnati regularly.

Yadamma's journey from earning Rs. 500 a day selling beverages to running a successful ice cream manufacturing unit earning Rs. 3,000 daily is a testament to her resilience and the support she received from DBRC and other agencies. Despite facing hurdles in accessing loans and bureaucratic delays, DBRC's assistance enabled her to secure

financial resources and navigate obstacles. The loan approval from Canara Bank, supplemented by a subsidy, provided the capital needed to purchase machinery and the loan from Unnati scheme helped her to buy materials for her business. With DBRC's support, Yadamma overcame challenges, transformed her life, and set an inspiring example for her community. ■

## Turning Wheels: Empowering Rural Dalit Youth

- Opportunity knocks in Kandrikagudem village
- A dream takes shape • From dream to reality

**Mr. Kondapalli Kondala Rao**, a 42-year-old resident of Kandrikagudem village in Eluru Rural mandal, Eluru District, has been living in this village for over two decades and running an auto, making a living. His wife is a homemaker, and he has two sons who are pursuing their studies.

The District Industrial Department extended an invitation to the team from DBRC for a pivotal meeting. Recognizing the untapped potential nestled within the rural communities, the department sought to empower individuals and support them to strengthen their livelihoods. They informed about the opportunities the communities can avail ranging from food processing units to small tiffin centers, each a way to economic empowerment and self-reliance.

Ms. Jhansi Gosala, accompanied by twelve community members from Scheduled Castes, participated in the meeting and learned about the opportunities available to strengthen their livelihoods. Kondal Rao, the auto driver, dreamt about buying a car, but his financial condition has always pulled him back. So, by understanding that there is an opportunity, he shared his wish



with our DBRC representative Ms. Gosala. Jhansi, articulating his desire to secure a means of sustainable income through the acquisition of a car, a vehicle that would not only ferry passengers but also usher in a new era of prosperity for his family.

Mrs. Jhansi facilitated the application process, through the prism of government subsidies, Kondala Rao's dream became a reality, with a car worth Rs. 13,50,000 now within reach, thanks to a subsidy of 45%. Kondala Rao embarked on a journey of entrepreneurship, his car becoming a conduit for change as it traversed the winding roads of opportunity. ■

# Deyyala Ravuru becomes Ambedkar Colony: From Darkness to Light

- Communities oppressed by living near a burial ground.
- DBRC's interventions restore dignity and respect.
- The area receives a new name, signalling a fresh start for the community.



Deyyala Ravuru, an area located about 3 kilometers from Samanthipudi Village, is home to around 40 Scheduled Tribe families living beside the burial ground. DBRC began working in this area in 2020. Our initial visit revealed houses flooded with water flowing from nearby agricultural fields. The community lacked basic amenities like roads, clean drinking water, and electricity, living in extremely difficult conditions. Living beside the burial ground also caused constant fear among residents. To obtain basic necessities like rations and vegetables, they had to travel approximately 6 kilometers.

DBRC intervened to improve their situation. Gunturi Nagamani, our team member, approached the village Sarpanch, Mr. Vengaiah, requesting the construction of a road for easier movement and drainage of the stagnant water using pipes. He agreed, and after consistent follow-up for six months, the roads were laid, and a drainage system was constructed.

We then contacted Mr. Immanuel, the Additional Engineer of the Electrical Department, requesting a transformer to provide electricity. He took me there and installed a transformer using the SC/ST Sub Plan, and through the same program, 25 families received free electricity meters.

The people of the area informed us that the stagnant water was used by those attending burial services to wash themselves. To address this issue,

we requested Mr. Vengaiah to install a borewell within the burial ground premises, providing an alternative water source, and he did so.

In 2022, we invited Mr. Akula Ravi Shankar, the Mandal Revenue Officer, to participate in a Civil Rights Day meeting. However, he initially struggled to locate the area. Upon arrival, he inquired about the area's name. Residents explained that the area lacked a formal name and was simply referred to as "Deyyala Ravuru" due to its location near the burial ground. They further explained that this association discouraged marriage alliances with people from other areas. Recognizing the need, the MRO immediately took measures to install a signboard after naming the area "Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Samanthapudi ST Colony." This new name has had a positive impact, with residents reporting increased acceptance and successful marriage arrangements outside the community.

DBRC has facilitated the application process for house pattas (land title deeds) for 18 families, with all applications approved. We have also assisted 10 families in securing housing, along with helping them obtain Aadhaar cards, ration cards, caste certificates, and access to other government schemes.

These interventions have resulted in a significant improvement in the lives of these communities, enabling them to live with dignity and self-respect. They now proudly call themselves residents of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Samanthapudi ST Colony.



# From No One to Someone



- **VMC is the first ULB in Andhra Pradesh to issue occupational identity cards to waste pickers**
- **DBRC played a vital role in identifying waste pickers and issuing ID cards**
- **Power of advocacy paves the way for change**
- **Recognition lead to access the schemes and services**

**W**aste, once considered useless, has now gained importance for the wealth hidden within it. Waste pickers, though unorganized, illiterate, and often marginalized, play a crucial role in recovering, sorting, and selling recycling materials such as paper, plastic, glass, and metal. Through their efforts in reducing, reusing, and recycling municipal waste, they significantly contribute to environmental sustainability. However, their contributions often go unrecognized, and they face harassment, low social and health status, and unsanitary living conditions.

DBRC has initiated an intervention in Guntur and Vijayawada since 2016 aimed at improving the living conditions of the waste pickers by facilitating them in availing entitlements, schemes, and services of the government. Recognizing that waste pickers face discrimination, stigma, and accusations of theft, DBRC's team met the municipal Commissioners of Guntur and Vijayawada multiple times and requested the issuance of Occupational Identity Cards for waste pickers to garner respect from society and lead lives with dignity.

A team from the Alliance of Indian Waste Pickers (DBRC is a member of the Alliance) met the Union Minister for Environment in New Delhi and the Joint Secretary of the Minister for Social Justice and advocated for policy changes to integrate waste pickers into solid waste management and include them to access schemes from the National SafaiKarmachari Finance Development

Corporation (NSKFDC). The advocacy efforts had a positive impact, and the Ministry of Social Justice has included waste pickers as beneficiaries in the NSKFDC, allocating 10% of the budget. Besides that, the Swachh Bharat Mission's "Swachh Survekshan-2017" survey has allocated 29 marks to cities/municipalities for recognizing waste pickers and integrating them into solid waste management.

Based on these policy changes, DBRC has consistently advocated with Municipal Corporations in Guntur and Vijayawada for the issuance of occupational ID Cards to waste pickers. We have submitted representations and finally, the commissioner of Vijayawada, Mr. J. Nivas, IAS, has agreed to provide Occupational Identity cards in collaboration with DBRC. Identity cards were issued to 627 waste pickers in Vijayawada. Inspired by this, we also advocated with the corporations of Eluru, Kurnool, and Tenali and succeeded in obtaining Occupational Identity Cards there as well.

Vijayawada is the first city in Andhra Pradesh to issue Occupational Identity Cards to waste pickers, and DBRC is proud to have collaborated with the Municipal Corporation of Vijayawada in this process. Now, waste pickers proudly wear these ID cards as they collect waste. These cards represent more than just identification; they signify recognition for their work, hope for their future, and a shield for their protection." ■

# OUR SECTORS OF ENGAGEMENT



- ◆ Gender Equality and Climate Justice will be cross cutting through all the programmes.
- ◆ DBRC aids marginalized communities in disaster preparedness, relief and rehabilitation efforts.



# Rays of Change

Empowering Marginilised Communities

## ABOUT US

Dalit Bahujan Resource Centre was established in 1992 to advance the legacy of **Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar** by working for the Socio-Economic and Cultural transformation of the Dalit Bahujan Communities with special focus on women and children.

**DBRC** focuses on transforming the lives of these Communities by providing information, knowledge and capacity building.

**DBRC** works for promotion of livelihood, dignity and self-respect among Dalits Adivasis, Waste Pickers and other informal workers.

## MISSION

To enable assertive interventions of Dalit Bahujan Communities towards their socio economic empowerment.

## VISION

To achieve social justice and social democracy to reclaim human dignity of Dalit Bahujan Communities.

## GOAL

To enable Dalit Bahujans to actualize their dreams, a new society where Dalit Bahujans will avail their rights and entitlements; develop strong social and financial resources; and become part of decision making bodies.



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