

# EFFORT TO BRING BACK IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

**SSK teacher initiates brick kiln workers' son Rajesh with letters**

## **Policy intervention to fight off illiteracy**

Policy objective of the government sponsored initiative School Education Shagun (SE Shagun) under the all-covering Sarba Shiksha Abhiyan mission is to promote education for all. The goal is set according to the Right to Education Act. Being governed by that cherished objective, efforts are being made to include the children of the marginalized segment of the society in the education system deprived of the chances of being enrolled in schools. Rajesh Majhi, a 10 year old boy of migrant labourers from Bihar working in a brick kiln at Nadia district, is one such case who has never been admitted in any school.



1) Rajesh in his mud house smiling and leafing through the book he got from SSK teacher

## **Plight of the boy in penury**

We have met Rajesh Majhi, a 10 year old boy during our field visit at Nadia district. He lives in a cramped one-room makeshift mud house inside a brick kiln of Haringhata in Nadia district. He lives there with his parents and two brothers. When we asked him about his age, he just turned to his mother who was also not very sure about it. She smiled and paused for sometime before she replied, "About 10 -12 years". Rajesh has two younger brothers who are 7 and 5 years old respectively. They also have never set their feet in any school.

Rajesh's mother Sunita Devi informed that they hailed from Nawada district of Bihar. They used to come to West Bengal each year to work in the brick kiln in November and return to their native place in May-June.

She said, “We have three children. We have no option to keep them at our village in Bihar. Nobody is there to look after them. We bring them here with us.” Sunita Devi also said, “When my husband and I go for work, the children loiter here and there and play with other kids of the locality.”

So we understood that the children had none to look after them here either when their parents ventured out to work for long hours. Their daily

earnings are mainly spent on buying groceries and other necessary stuff for running the household. Sunita Devi said, “Everything is very costly here. Whatever we earn, we spend that on buying food items. We also have to send some money back home occasionally.”

When we asked both the parents what they wanted their children to do in life, Sunita Devi smiled and said that, “They will have to work like us.”

We interacted with Rajesh. He was a jolly boy who eagerly showed us the books he got from the teacher of Dasdia Daspara SSK. The teacher of Dasdia Daspara SSK had identified Rajesh as a never-enrolled child during a survey on ‘out of school children’.

Rajesh has never been to any school due to the itinerant lifestyle of his migrant labourer parents. He cannot read but can identify sun, moon, birds and animals by the pictures.

### **Steely resolve**

We spoke to the teacher of Dasdia Daspara. She told us, “It is difficult to communicate with Rajesh as he doesn’t comprehend Bengali.”

But the teacher seemed very keen to help Rajesh embrace the education system with her persistent efforts. As a result, Rajesh received some text books. We were informed that the teacher had already started working with Rajesh in his mud house. This dedication and house to house innovative intervention on the part of SSK teachers to include non-enrolled children in education system will certainly reduce illiteracy in a vast and populous country like India which wants to alleviate poverty and underdevelopment by scaling up the social as well as physical infrastructure.

**Rajesh Majhi:** Mother – Sunita Majhi

Age: 10 years, Class: V (Dasdia Daspara SSK)

Address: Intbhata, Haringhata, District: Nadia,

West Bengal 741249



2) Rajesh smilingly showing his book to his family and friends