

Learning Camp May to June 2008:

Leela – aged 14



Leela (Changed Name) comes from a very poor family. She lives with her parents and four siblings. Two years ago Leela had attended a literacy camp for four months that was organized by the Government. After the camp Leela went back to home for tending to her goats and for working as laborer occasionally. She was paid Rs. 35 a day for the labor work.

When she first came to the Learning Camp in May 2008 she did know some letters already. Soon she learnt more and more letters and started reading and writing words. She enjoyed learning in the camp and quickly picked up some basic calculations including subtraction, addition and counting till 100.

Leela speaks very little but she enjoys playing games with other kids in the evening and learning as much as the camp offers. She wants to study further and she aspires to teach her village children when she grows up. She says- “Because we are poor and we cant afford to go to the school. During rains the streams are full and so it is difficult to go to the school.”

Babu – aged 11



When Babu (Changed Name) first came to the camp he was very quiet and did not really participated in any activity or playing with children. Soon he became rather active in all the activities. Babu enjoys drawing and painting. He is also very bright and is very popular among his teachers. He picked up reading writing skills so soon (in only 20 days) that in his first evaluation itself he was promoted to level ‘B’ from level ‘C’.

Babu did not want to go back home when the camp finished because Babu has a difficult childhood. Both of his parents work as laborers and are alcoholics.

Babu had attended school until 3rd standard when he was little but he had to give up since his parents were not able to afford the expenses. He was sent to Gujarat (neighboring State) to work in cotton fields. When he came back with what little money he had earned, his father took all the money away from him. He then started tending to his goats and soon after this he was brought to the Learning Camp.

In the Camp Babu has enjoyed his life to its maximum and has learnt so much. The teachers wonder on the fact that how little Babu who is so full of life and talents could tend to goats or work as laborer and afford to have a difficult childhood.

Ramu – aged 13



Ramu (Changed Name) talks with heavy heart about his family. His mother died due to an unknown disease when he was as little as two and half years old. He has four young sisters. His father owns some land that is not productive enough and so the family depends on their business of Liquor-making, which does not provide sufficient income to the family. So Ramu had to work in the cotton fields for some time in Gujarat (neighboring State) to help out but he always wanted to study. When he returned from Gujarat he thought of going to School but could not do so due to his family situation. Since then he started tending to his goats.

This May-June when Ramu attended the learning camp he became one of the most favorite children of his teachers. Ramu participated in all the activities in the camp with much interest and enthusiasm. Though technically it is Ramu's second camp as he has attended one such camp in the past (two year back) but because he stayed out of the contact with education for two years in between nobody expected Ramu to pick up reading-writing skills as soon as in twenty days.

Ramu aspires to study a lot so that he could get a good job to help his family fight the poverty. He enjoyed staying in the camp very much and he particularly loved taking part in all activities in the Camp.