

**One Day workshop on Right to Information Act  
1 September 2010  
Astitva Office, Defence Colony, Dehradun**



A one day workshop on Right to Information Act, 2005 was organized jointly by Astitva and the Mountain Children's Foundation on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2010 at the Astitva's office in Defense Colony Dehradun. Astitva is an organization that works to empower and enable women from poor socio-economic areas to access better paid work they also work with the children of these workers to provide support and training on several issues. In this respect the MCF teamed up with Astitva to provide training on the Right to Information to these children. There were 16 participants all told. There were 13 children and three facilitator members of the Astitva team Meenakshi, Deepa and Rohan. Dwarika and Aditi were the training team from the MCF.

The participants were asked what they knew about Right to Information (RTI). The children were unaware of the RTI and the Astitva facilitators said that they would like more information.



The Right to Information Act was then explained in detail; what is Information and what is the right to Information? How it is important for us? Why should we use RTI? What is the process of filing an application? There were games interspersed in the training to ensure the interest of the children did not flag.

After this session the children were divided into two groups. In their group discussion the children discussed the issues for filing RTI applications. Meenakshi and Rohan supported one group each. It was very interesting to see these children come up with issues that were important for them. After an animated discussion in both groups a presentation was given.

The issues the groups brought out were –

Group 1- Kuresha, Sonam, Sitaram, Sandeep, Ganga, Pooja and Meenakshi



1. Retaining wall (pushta) has not been completed for the last 5 months,
2. Water flows on the road at Chakshah Nagar
3. Lack of dustbin in Deep Nagar
4. Students have not got all their books in the government schools
5. No BPL ration cards
6. Huge pot holes in Shastri Nagar road
7. No Anganwadi in Deep Nagar
8. Electricity outages in Deep Nagar

Group 2 - Pooja, Ankita, Priya, Komal, Khusboo, Mamta, Manju and Rohan.

1. Huge pot holes in the road.
2. Retaining wall only half built
3. No street lights
4. Traffic lights not working
5. Broken dust bin
6. Books not distributed on time in government schools.
7. Leakage in the school roof
8. No safety wall on the banks of the river
9. Bypass road is badly damaged
10. Rain water comes into the school ground
11. Rain water drains are chocked
12. PDS ration is impure



In the next session the children learnt how to write an RTI application on an issue they selected. This session was a little difficult on the children as some of them were not very fluent in writing. Kuresha a young girl was determined to write her application. Even after the other participants had left she focused and finished writing her application. Her feedback was that she was happy to have learnt something new and her sense of accomplishment was complete when she finally finished writing her application.

Meenakshi and Rohan the facilitators understood the act and also learnt how to file an application. Meenakshi wrote an application for Social Welfare Department seeking information about the schemes for the women and children. She said that she would follow up with the children and reiterate what they had learnt.



At the end of the workshop Meenakshi gave the vote of thanks.

Our understanding after working with the children associated with Astitva was that MCF should have trained the children for two days. Also it was rather like putting the cart before the horse. We felt the children should first be introduced to the concept of working together in a group and forming a Bal Sangathan, learning about child rights, trying to make a difference in the community and finally learn about the Right to Information.

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