

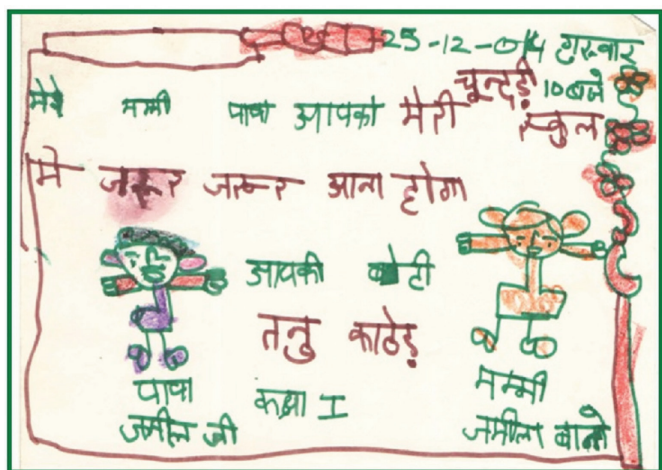
ENGAGING WITH PARENTS

They begin to see the value in ensuring that each child attends school regularly. They look for solutions for ways to ensure that household chores and responsibilities do not block their children from attending schools. They engage with the teacher to know what she is planning for the next quarter. They begin to see the roles that they can play. Their involvement with school gradually begins to grow.



Inviting parents

OELP had been organising regular parent meetings in the village common area or at the MNAREGA work sites. For the past few years we decided to hold the parent meetings in the OELP class and share the OELP classroom and work. In the month of December every year there is an exciting buzz in all the OELP classes as the children are given the responsibility of bringing their parents to the parent meeting. The children make colourful invitation cards for their parents. These hand-written cards have proved to effectively capture parental feelings of pride. Parents who were earlier dismissive of these meetings



now take the trouble to reorganise their chores so that they can make the time to attend. At times, the children take on the role of a postman and deliver invitations to parents of children who are irregular in school. As a result, there has been an increase in the attendance within these meetings.

Some experiences

The children in most villages take the parents meeting very seriously and are determined to make their parents attend.

Deepak Vaishnav got up really early on the day of the meeting and accompanied his mom early in the misty, wintry haze to the fields to help her cut fodder so that she could take time off to come to the school. Later, during the meeting his mother shared how impatiently he kept prodding her to hurry up. He was worried that she might be late!



Madhu Baghriya brought her grandmother to the meeting as both her parents are daily wage workers and missing a day at work meant losing one day's earnings!

When **Nairaj Mohamed's** mother found very little work in her profile folder, she had to confront a little girl who scolded her and blamed her mum for sending her off with the goats and buffalos. "You are responsible", said her angry little girl, "how can I do work for my file when you don't send me to school?"

Profile folder as windows into the world of learning

These profile folders are shared at parent meetings and even though many parents are unable to read they are able to discern their child's progress with astuteness.

In fact, it can be quite moving to see the care and interest with which a parent who cannot read and yet goes carefully through each page; sometimes making comparisons with the writings of other children in the class. Through these profile folders parents get drawn into discussions based on their child's learning trajectories. They are able to follow their child's progress, as well as, get an idea of the work that is being done in school. They begin to see the value in ensuring that each child attends school regularly. They look for solutions for ways to ensure that household chores and responsibilities do not block their children from attending schools. They engage with the teacher to know what she is planning for the next quarter. They begin to see the roles that they can play. Their involvement with school gradually begins to grow.

