

K V Bharathi



Adhyaksha of Oorkunte Mittur Gram Panchayat (2012-13)

First-time member

Ward: Chiyandhalli

Head-Social Justice (2012-14)

Responsible for functions: Public Distribution System, Nutrition, and Complaint Handling

Achievements as Head-Social Justice

- Facilitated formation of the Bal Vikas Samitis (Child Welfare Committees) and ensured their regular meetings
- Took a lead in improving both the quality and quantity of mid-day meals, to meet requisite government norms
- Addressed leakages in the procurement of grains at ration shops
- Conducted meetings of anganwadi & school teachers in the Gram Panchayat office to assess service delivery and resolve problems with the line departments
- Ensured shifting of an anganwadi in Batlibhavanahalli from a cattle shed to a rented premises

“I am very proud of the drastic improvements I could bring to the mid-day meal schemes and hope the next Head will take forward my work.”

- **Personal motivation to be a Gram Panchayat member**

The encouragement of my husband was my main motivation to join the Gram Panchayat. Given the satisfaction of the work I was able to do for citizens, I would like to re-contest elections as well, if my health permits and reservations play out favourably.

- **Self-transformation in five years**

When I got elected to the Gram Panchayat, I had no clarity about my role or what needed to be done. I had a very low understanding of the Panchayati Raj system. The anganwadi was right next door to my home but I had never bothered visiting it.

On being elected to the Gram Panchayat, I underwent a lot of new emotions- stress of having taken on a new responsibility.

From then to now, I believe I have travelled a long journey to develop a lot of courage, build a good rapport with people and gain a detailed understanding of how institutions should function. I attribute a lot of what I am today to the Gram Panchayat Organisation Development project and the capacity I developed through it. So much so, that I would maintain meticulous reports of my meetings, work etc.

I have gained the confidence to address larger gatherings such as the Gram Sabha. I used to otherwise blunder while addressing meetings. There was an instance, when I addressed teachers, but focused on information about anganwadis which was of little relevance to them.

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MONITORING CHILD DEVELOPMENT: K V Bharathi attends a Bal Vikas Samiti meeting in her Panchayat in Oorkunte Mittur.

- **Challenges faced**

Being a Gram Panchayat member involves dealing with several logistical challenges on a day-to-day basis. The lack of transportation facilities to visit interior villages often hampers the efficacy of work. I would often take a ride with my husband when I had to make such visits, but he too has his own routine and work. It would involve shelling out my own money. Even if one does that, sometimes there is simply no mode of transportation.

The non-cooperation of government officials and MLAs can also prove a hurdle in getting work done.

- **Facilitating factors**

The unstinted support of my husband enabled me to handle the responsibility I had taken on with a lot of interest and efficiency. Initially, he would even take the effort of making notes on issues I could take up for discussion or how I could go about my work.

I also benefitted hugely from the Gram Panchayat Organisation Development project. The delineation of portfolios to individual Gram Panchayat members gave me a better insight into what was expected of me and allowed me to work efficiently towards set targets.

Advice to new members

Members should gain the confidence of citizens as it will facilitate the delivery of services to them.

They should avoid party politics and let the result of their work speak for itself.

I hope they carry on the work of the previous Gram Panchayat, even if they outline their own vision.

K V Bharathi's vision for the new Gram Panchayat

- **The new Gram Panchayat should institutionalize components of the Gram Panchayat Organisation Development (structure, vision etc)**
- **There should be proper maintenance of records and professional documentation**

“Bharati was undoubtedly one of the most active Gram Panchayat-Heads during her tenure. She would unfailingly be in the Gram Panchayat every day and instituted many systems. For instance, she ensured that the Gram Panchayat would send a monthly notice to each School Development and Monitoring Committee to ensure regular meetings. She also played an active role in the formation of Bal Vikas Samitis.”

-K C Balaji, Panchayat Development Officer

Oorkunte Mittur Gram Panchayat