

## Nutrition Gardens and literacy in schools

Ours is an upper primary school with children from Bhejaguda and 5 to 6 surrounding villages come to this school. In 2014, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation began a 'Farming System for Nutrition' intervention under the LANSA project. Nutrition awareness among the young is an important component of the programme, and so a series of programmes were organised in our school. Following a discussion with staff and the school management committee, we developed a nutrition garden in our school premises. It was to serve primarily as an educational tool for the children. The main objectives of this initiative was to create awareness on the



importance of micronutrient-rich green leafy vegetables like drumstick leaves, Indian spinach, amaranthus, coriander and spinach. The advantage of eating Orange flesh sweet potato, different fruits such as papaya, lemon, pomegranate and banana, as well as seasonal vegetables like radish, broad bean, runner bean and pumpkin were emphasised.

Depending on space availability, the nutrition garden was established in 0.05 acre area of our school. Seeds and technical guidance was given by the project team. Teachers, the cook and children were involved during all stages of preparing the garden - land preparation, sowing, watering, weeding and harvesting. The produce from the garden is being used while preparing the Mid Day Meal (MDM) for the children. Awareness generated has had an impact in the homes. I remember parents sharing their experience at different meetings relating how they cooked recipes like Indian spinach curry and leafy vegetable fry since their children wanted to eat them. The idea of a nutrition garden in schools has spread to nearby villages. Recently the District Education Officer visited our school, and was impressed by the vegetable garden. He suggested that such gardens should be established in other district schools as well.



**Name : Lal Mohan Mishra**

School Name : Bhejaguda Upper Primary School

Village : Bhejaguda,

Block: Boipariguda, District: Koraput

Age : 59 years

Occupation : Teaching

Total no. of students : 118

Written by **Santosh Raj Benia**,  
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