

Case Study: Suman Kumari Toppo (11)



SUMAN KUMARI TOPPO, from the tiny tribal village of Hutup in Ranchi District, is a girl to watch. She is one of only eight children from Hutup to be selected last year as a Yuwa Scholar and is the organizer of Yuwa's first football team.

She was studying in 5th class at a local government primary school where she, like her classmates, could barely perform simple subtraction. But Suman is intelligent and capable, and was selected based on attendance and effort. After three months of intensive tutoring from Yuwa, she passed the entrance examination to attend Mount Carmel School, a well regarded private school, where she is now attending 4th class.

Suman's mother, Sukro Devi, earns a daily wage separating plastic trash, and her father, Debu Oraon, who suffers from diabetes, attends to their small fields. Their attitude towards their daughters is quite progressive. Although they earn just Rs 100 (\$2.20) per day, and Rs 25-30,000 (\$550-650) in the summer from their vegetable

harvest, after Suman was selected for a scholarship (covering 75 percent school fees), they increased their expenditure on education for their oldest daughter as well, putting her into private tutoring, and enrolled their youngest daughter into a private kindergarten.

Suman showed a spirit and generosity that is impressive but typical among her teammates when she suggested giving up her title as captain several months after having organized the team. She thought the position would be better filled by one of her older teammates, and after a vote, one captain and two assistant captains were chosen, among them her older sister, Seema.

"It feels good being part of a team," says Suman. "Sometimes study at Mount Carmel is very hard, but I am trying to study hard and keep playing with my team. My mother, father and whole family are happy and proud, and like Yuwa's program very much. I think it's good for all girls to come regularly to the ground and play."



Suman working with her father at home drying rice paddy (Photo credits: Ashok Nath Dey for *The Hindustan Times*)