

Munilakshamma was the Anganwadi Teacher at Kalanagar. Initially, she was not very confident or outspoken. However, the training, exposure and continuous support she received from Prajayatna over time helped her grow both professionally and personally. It not only enhanced the quality of her classroom —better planning and active engagement with children—but also strengthened her ability to build meaningful relationships with key stakeholders, including parents and members of the community.

Through regular interactions, meetings, and collaborative efforts, she gradually developed the confidence to address concerns, communicate effectively and mobilize community support for the Anganwadi Centre. This transformation enabled her to create a more child-friendly learning environment and foster greater trust and participation from the community.

Gradually, the Anganwadi Centre became a vibrant and welcoming space for the children and the community.

When **Munilakshamma** was transferred to Kammagondanahalli Anganwadi Centre (AWC), only 25 children were attending regularly. Soon after her transfer, the rainy season began, and serious infrastructure issues emerged. The roof started leaking due to mould damage, making it extremely difficult to manage the children during rainy days. She immediately informed the Women and Child Development (WCD) Department about the situation. The department connected her with an engineer, who inspected the building and clearly stated that the structure required complete reconstruction, as any temporary repair would not be sustainable.

Managing young children in a leaking and cramped space was challenging. Munilakshamma approached the School Development and Monitoring Committee (SDMC) and showed them the condition of the Anganwadi room. The SDMC suggested a temporary solution of placing a sheet (churkey) over the roof to prevent leakage. However, Munilakshamma understood that this would only be a short-term arrangement and the problem would continue to recur.

There was another concern. If the Anganwadi vacated the room temporarily without proper documentation or assurance, she might not get the space back and could lose its rightful claim over it. Determined to safeguard the centre, Munilakshamma began searching for official records that clarified how the room had originally been allocated for the Anganwadi. She enquired with the school teachers but did not receive any clear information.

Further enquiry revealed that Mr. Patel Shamanna's family had donated land or space to the school. She also learned that around 2001, the CMC President at that

time, had facilitated the construction of one room specifically for the Anganwadi. However, no clear documentation was readily available.

Meanwhile, an NGO approached the school with a proposal to reconstruct the toilets. However, the Anganwadi wall was structurally connected to the existing toilet block, and reconstruction would require demolishing part of the Anganwadi wall. The actively functioning SDMC discussed the matter and felt that instead of only rebuilding the toilets, it would be more beneficial to reconstruct the entire school building, as the number of children had increased and the available rooms were insufficient.

Under the guidance of the SDMC president Mr. Lakshminarayan, Munilakshamma and committee members approached the Mr. Shamanna Patel's family (grand children) to verify whether the donated space was for both School and Anganwadi. They found that the donation was recorded only in the name of the school. Munilakshamma then contacted the WCD department to check whether any official record existed regarding the Anganwadi room, but unfortunately, no documentation was available there either. But there was a stone which said about the construction of Anganwadi centre in the school.

In search of a sustainable solution, the SDMC, Head teacher and the Anganwadi teacher approached Mr. Venkatesh (Devegowdru), a politician and respected area representative. He responded positively, listened patiently, and conducted three consecutive meetings to understand the issue thoroughly. After discussions, a collective decision was taken to reconstruct the entire school building, including a dedicated room for the Anganwadi.

Then a community meeting was called, including parents of children, community leaders and representatives. Presented the plan of construction in front of all the participants, the representative of a local trust known as the KBC Trust who was present in the meeting agreed to contribute a major portion of the expenditure. Other community representatives also came forward to contribute and the decision was taken to temporarily shift the school and Anganwadi.

Consequently, a formal letter was submitted to the WCD department requesting permission to temporarily shift the Anganwadi to a rented building until the new structure was completed. The department approved the request, and Munilakshamma shifted the Anganwadi to a rented premises. The old building was demolished on 19th September, 2025 and reconstruction work began under the leadership of Mr. Venkatesh, KBC trust and the community.

Munilakshamma acknowledges the immense support provided by the SDMC President, Mr. Lakshminarayan, and other members in ensuring that children would soon have access to a safe and proper school and Anganwadi building.

Alongside infrastructure improvements, the Anganwadi itself witnessed remarkable growth. Enrollment increased from 25 children to 65 children. Parents were highly appreciative of Munilakshmamma's approach to conducting learning activities. She regularly organizes Bal Vikas Samiti meetings, mothers' meetings, and ECCE Day celebrations to engage parents and strengthen community participation.

She attributes much of her professional growth to the training she received from Prajayatna. Earlier, her teaching was limited mainly to rhymes and storytelling. However, after the training, she developed a deeper understanding of child development. She now plans activities that promote holistic development and pays attention to every detail of a child's growth. She has also procured diverse play and learning materials catering to different developmental domains, making the Anganwadi a vibrant and enriching learning space.

Munilakshmamma proudly shares that she now understands her role far better than before and feels confident in creating a nurturing and stimulating environment for young children where they are allowed to play, explore, learn and grow. Her journey reflects strong leadership, persistence, community mobilization, and a deep commitment to ensuring quality early childhood care and education.