

“The precocious Dubey Ji”

Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh, January 2017



“He can gather his entire village single-handedly, to confront them on their delinquency” – this is what the people of Charera village in Chitrakoot, UP have to say about **Shivam Dubey**. Listening to them, anyone would imagine Shivam to look like a person having a sturdy physique and poised attitude. Despite his diminutive physique, he is a magnetic character to meet, who manages to startle you with his authority, sensibility and spirit.

Shivam is a 15 year old boy, studying in 9th standard. He lives in a joint-family, where his father is a farmer and his mother is a home-maker. From a young age of 9 years, Shivam has been involved in working with many social organizations that visited his village as part of their work. Shivam has worked with many social activists from India as well as abroad and he has also traveled to Delhi once, to attend a meeting as part of one of these social ventures. His engagement in such programs has made him socially aware and confident compared to other youth of his age. When **ABSSS** (Akhil Bhartiya Samaj Sewa Sansthan) campaigned regarding Kadam Badhate Chalo (KBC) program in his village, he had no second thoughts in joining the program and became a part of the 40 member core group having 20 boys and 20 girls.



One day, Shivam received a call from one of the field officers of ABSSS informing him about the KBC Sports Leadership workshop being held in Bargarh village, in which some outside trainers are going to come. Shivam misinterpreted the message and was excited to know that some foreigners are coming to his village to conduct a workshop. Shivam feels fascinated to meet foreigners because he had a great experience a couple of years back when he met, what he likes to call him “A White Man”. When he reached the location of the workshop, he was surprised to find out that no foreigner was conducting the workshop. Instead of being disappointed, Shivam decided to make the most of this opportunity and showed enthusiasm for the entire duration of the workshop.



Shivam’s performance during the Sports Leadership Workshop was exceptional. He actively participated in all the games and was part of some thought-provoking discussions. But what distinguished Shivam from rest of the participants was his relentless pursuit of information. Despite the adolescent squeak in his voice, he demonstrates a maturity in thought far ahead of his age. Out of affection, the trainers named him “**Dubey Ji**” which he loved a lot and it got pretty popular among the fellow participants.

Shivam shared:

“Growing up in a village, I’ve started to understand that education is a very important tool in building personal character. And by education I don’t mean only studies. For example, this workshop is a source of education and it uses sports as a medium. So that is why this workshop is very necessary for all young boys and girls of my village. With the help of this workshop, we not only got to play games but we also learned that we can use sports to further educate our families and communities and help them emerge from the old-fashioned ideologies”.

**The above quote has been translated in English, from Hindi, in which it was originally narrated.*

A couple of days after the conclusion of the workshop, Shivam organized a sports gathering in his village which was attended by 40 youth, 22 boys and 18 girls. He conducted various games relating to leadership, teamwork and communication and asked debriefing questions in his local language to make sure that participants understand the rationale behind those activities. The joyousness of his nature, his sterling character, and his thirst for learning make Shivam a strong contender to drive change within his community.

