



**BARADRONE  
SOCIAL  
WELFARE  
INSTITUTION  
(BSWI)**

*VILL./P.O. – BARADRONE,  
BLOCK – DIAMOND HARBOUR,  
DIST. SOUTH 24 PARGANAS  
WEST BENGAL 743332*

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**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2016-2017**

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*FRAMBLE SUBMISSION OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY & CEO.*

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Dear friends, members and well-wishers,

We are very happy to present this Annual Report of the year 2016-2017 with the details of our activities implemented during this year. We have also tried our best to give you the correct and complete information about the programs as well as the process of the administrative aspects.

I do hope you would like the presentation, and, in case you have any suggestion to upgrade our works, please feel free to let us know. Your valuable feedback would highly be appreciated as always in the past.

We sincerely thank everyone who has joined their hands with the BSWI's activities and goals to make our dreams realities.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

SANJIB BHATTACHARYA

BARADRONE, July 15, 2017



## Introduction about the organisation - BSWI

Baradrone Social Welfare Institution (BSWI) is a pioneer organisation in West Bengal that originated in the year of 1961 as a village level textbook library and free coaching centre. BSWI received financial, material and technical support for carrying out village development initiatives. The opportunities and the association over the years helped create learning/lessons for BSWI and gain organizational experience. BSWI catalyses change in thousands of lives by implementing innovative efforts. We work in four focused areas:

- ⇒ Education, with an emphasis on the universal elementary and secondary education;
- ⇒ Livelihoods, with an emphasis on the economic empowerment of women;
- ⇒ Preventive & Promotional Health, for arresting CMRs, UFRs & MMRs and promotion of good reproductive health practices;
- ⇒ Women's Empowerment, for improving the status of poor women and advocating for protecting their rights.

## Vision

- *To contribute to building a society where all people can gain access to education, health care, and employment opportunities and where people can realize their full potential;*
- *To build a trusted bridge between the dreams and aspirations of individuals who care about suffering people and their realization;*
- *To build a professional organization that is secular, transparent, credible and accountable for all of its activities.*

**Mission:** To work for deprived people for their uplift and betterment with special emphasis on children and women and to provide them with education and basic needs opportunities and bring them into the mainstream of society.

## Details of the Executive Committee members of BSWI (As on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016):

Sl. No.	Name	Address	Position in the committee
1.	Prasanta Kumar Mitra	Vill. & P.O. Baradrone, Block – Diamond Harbour, Dist. South 24 Parganas, West Bengal, 743332.	President
2.	Pranabananda Bhattacharya	-do-	Vice- President
3.	Sanjib Bhattacharya	-do-	General secretary
4.	Haran Chandra Paik	-do-	Treasurer
5.	Joydeb Mondal	-do-	Assistant Secretary
6.	Gour Gopal Naskar	-do-	Member
7.	Arati Sarkar	-do-	Member
8.	Sanchita Mondal	-do-	Member
9.	Dipali Bhattacharya	-do-	Member

## Operational sectors of BSWI:

- ⇒ Education & Empowerment
- ⇒ Community Health
- ⇒ Livelihood Development & Basic Needs
- ⇒ Organisation Building

## Objectives of the organisation:

- To liberate the people from the bondage of illiteracy
- To strengthen the target groups attain sound mental and physical health
- To improve the status of the women – socially, economically and organisationally
- To ensure food and income security for the people living below the poverty line
- To encourage the rural youths participate in rural development process
- To achieve an exploitation-free and oppression-free living environment ensuring harmony and co-existence.

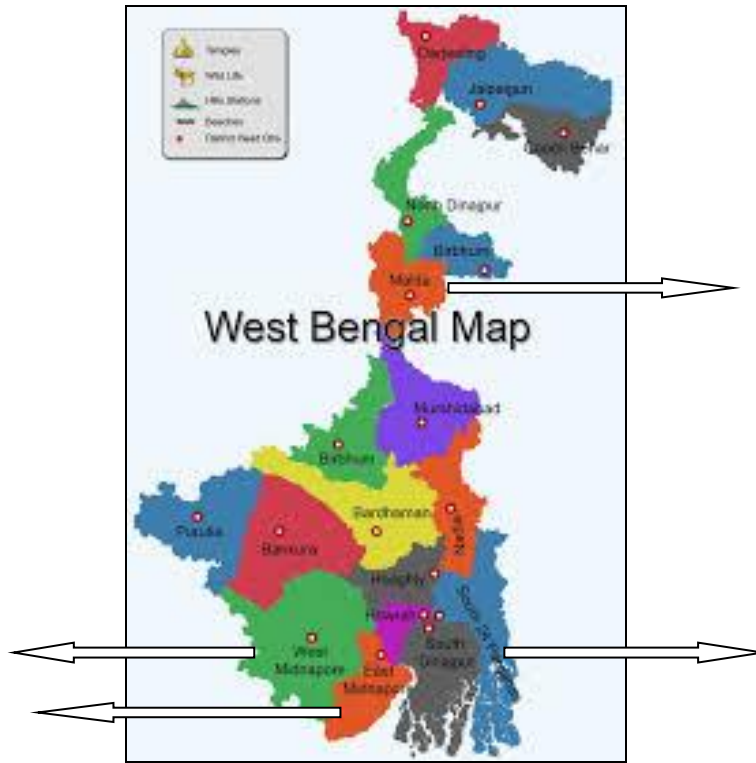
## Objectives of the year:

BSWI fixed the following objectives for the year based on the logical dimensions of the need of the area and the indicators in its baseline surveys:

- To mainstream at least 500 adolescent girls belonging to the minority and socially disadvantaged groups and support them attaining secondary education)

- To arrest dropout rate of eligible children, especially the girls and arrest child marriages in its project areas by encouraging children's education.
- To make at least 10,000 target families aware of child nutrition, adolescent health, maternal health, child survival and child development
- To include about 5000 rural women in the SHGs and empower them in socio-economic spheres
- To improve the skills of about 3000 target families in various on-farm and off-farm economic activities to reduce poverty,
- To provide sustainable income to at least 3500 families through agriculture, food security, enterprises and household economic activities.

**BSWI's Operational Areas**



Sl. No.	Districts	Blocks & villages	Target populations reached
1.	South 24 Parganas	Diamond Harbour I, Magrahat, Kulpi & Namkhana (40 villages)	52,000
2.	Malda	Gajole (15 villages)	18,000
3.	South Dinapur	Dinajpur (70 villages)	43,000
4.	North Dinajpur	Kaliaganj (36 villages)	39,600

**Other Information**

**Salary & benefits:**

Position	Amount per month	Highest paid staff (CEO)	Lowest paid staff (Night Guard)
Chief Executive Director	Rs. 49,500/-	Rs. 27,200/-	Rs. 5600/-

**Remuneration and reimbursements to Board members:**

Only the General Secretary is the full timer Executive Director of the organisation who receives remuneration. No other member receives remuneration from the organisation.

**Cost of international travel:** No international travel has been taken place by any volunteer, staff or board member.



## SECTOR: EDUCATION & EMPOWERMENT

BSWI supports the Right to Education Bill, 2009, with the aim of achieving universal enrolment, increasing school retention and improving the quality of education. In particular, we are concerned with deprived children, those who are denied access to education as a result of traditional or social barriers, such as caste, poverty, gender or ability. Evidence shows that children who are in school not only are empowered with education, but also tend to be more protected from abuse and exploitation. We strive to identify children who have dropped out of school, or at risk of leaving it. We partner with school authorities and teachers, school committees, families, children's groups and local elected representatives – rural Panchayat Institutions – to map out-of-school children, motivate the school system and families to get them back to school, and prevent dropping out. To prevent dropping out, we offer remedial education services through coaching centres being run on school premises or in the community. Services are in operation prior or after school hours to help students who may be first generation learners, or deprived of a conducive home environment where to do their homework. A network of our frontline workers and Self-Help Group members partner with government, rural schools and communities, and engage in a dialogue with families to highlight how the benefits of education would, in the long term, outweigh the loss of foregoing a low and temporary wage which a child may earn by leaving school. We work to overcome forms of social exclusion based on caste and gender discrimination that continue to play a part in keeping children, particularly girls, out of school.

*In the process, BSWI has progressively shifted from an emphasis on direct service provision to a focus on facilitating governance processes aimed to enhanced access to services, programs and budgets that are increasingly being made available in India, especially by government. BSWI's goal is to empower the community and engage duty-bearers in fulfilling the fundamental entitlements of rights-holders, especially deprived children and women.*

Having worked in various strings of Education since the year of 1976, BSWI has been able to give the people of the project areas a nudge regarding the need and utility of education – both bookish and moral. This flavour of education is now tangible in the project areas of BSWI and we are happy to state that today more and more people are coming forward to achieve education for themselves and for their wards. An outsider will not be able to distinguish between the situations in the areas in the year of 1976 and now in the year of 2012. There was a day in 1976 when not a single matriculation passed girl was available in most of the project villages to work as BSWI's education facilitator, and BSWI had to provide such workers in the villages from 'Baradrone' village and from the local block town Diamond Harbour. Today, we see that hundreds of girls and boys have attained high school and even college education as a result of our constant work in the educational spheres.

### The strategy

- BSWI has often raised local contribution mixed with external assistance to reach its goal. Extensive meetings with the parents, local government aided high schools, education authority, village leaders (PRI & religious leaders) have been organised to identify the problem students and to mainstream them. Retention in the high school till they attained Secondary education has been the objective of BSWI's Education perspective.
- Orientation of the SHGs: In the meetings organised by the SHGs, Education has been a regular agenda for discussion amongst the members. They discussed about their children's (especially that of their girls) progress in various classes. They also discussed about various challenges, barriers, problems to attain their children's education and at the same time they worked together to cross the hurdles.
- Networking with the government schools: The SHGs collaborated with the government schools by organising networking meetings and workshops as a joint venture in ensuring access for their wards. Community meetings, workshops and group discussions were also organised in the project villages those have been beneficial for the eligible children to be admitted/re-admitted in the government primary and high schools.
- Mobilising the community: Door-to-door interaction and motivation, organising Child Day, Girl Children's Day, Teachers' Day were organised on regular basis to give the target communities a nudge so that they think positively about their children's (especially girls') education. Discussions on reproductive health, evils of early marriages and teen pregnancies, dowry, child abuses, child labouring were held regularly in the project villages to sensitise the target communities and stakeholders' families. These had a significant effect to mobilising the target communities in favour of their children's education and betterment for a brighter future.
- Community-driven monitoring systems have been established to allow the community to analyze gaps and identify solutions in accessing services, together with service providers and local government representatives. Over the past 3 years, in Malda, participatory implementation and stringent monitoring have resulted in increasing school enrolment from 59% to 82%.

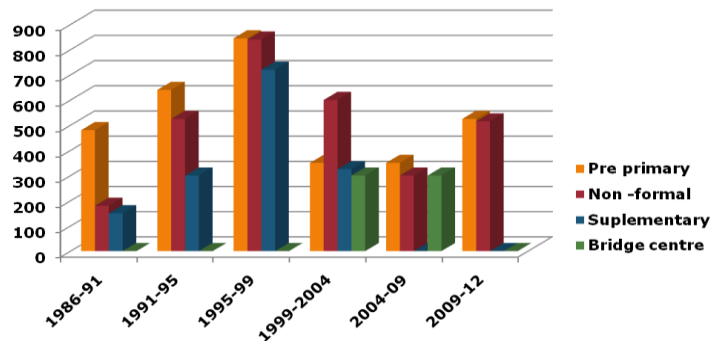


- People's empowerment helps internalise fundamental rights and demand services as entitled citizens. Women's self-help groups have become members of several government forums, such as the Gram Unnayan Samity, the Village Education Committee, the Village Health Nutrition Day.
- BSWI acts as a facilitator in engaging local development actors – the community, service providers and elected representatives – in a process aimed to strengthen good governance with and for children and women. Local governance partners are involved in participatory processes leading to increasing awareness on problems affecting the community, identifying issues through social mapping, planning interventions to address shared priorities, and monitoring the progressive fulfillment of human rights by all, especially the socially excluded.

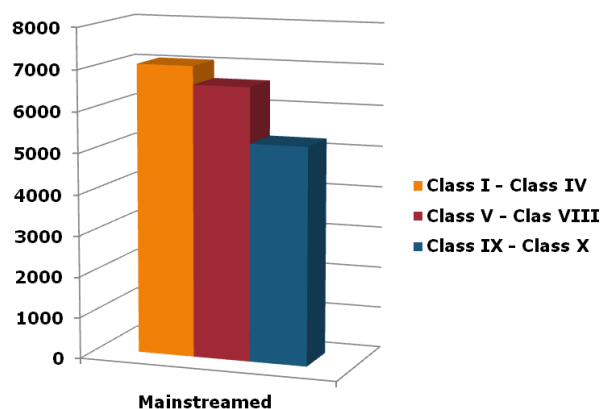
### Core activities accomplished during the year

Sl. No.	Activities	Quantity	Villages covered
1.	Book grants to needy students	138 students (112 girls)	22 villages
2.	School materials (bags, kits, uniforms etc.)	128 students (102 girls)	25 villages
3.	Community meetings on girls' education	127 meetings	28 villages
4.	Meetings with government school teachers	21 meetings	32 villages
5.	Tuition fees provided	26 girls	18 villages
6.	Readmitted drop out girls in high schools	16 girls	6 villages
7.	School admission fees provided	117 girls	32 villages

### EDUCATION SECTOR: BSWI'S ACHIEVEMENT SO FAR



### Mainstreaming of learners from BSWI's education centers



### BSWI's Future Perspectives:

- A priority approach on the high school-going girls of Class VII to Class X so that they are retained and pass out in the Secondary examination
- Opening of BLCs (Bridge Learning Centres) for such students with a focus on 'Inclusive Education for all'
- A holistic approach for *Inclusive education for the differently-able children* in its project areas, because not much work has been done in this field by BSWI



- Opening of Vocational and Professionally-oriented coaching centres those are needed as a future path to the success of the education programs of BSWI
- Opening of a TTC (Teacher Training College) in the campus of BSWI as this is highly needed for the passed-out candidates to compete for the posts of teachers recruited by the state government. There is no such training institute in the blocks where BSWI is working. There are far away training centres those charge absorbent amount that the target group cannot afford
- Expansion of the BSWI's education models to yet uncovered villages where drop-out rates, teen marriages and level child labouring is high
- BSWI should formulate and publish its training modules and various need-based training courses for the benefit of other institutions/organisations and it should start working as a training institution.

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## SECTOR: COMMUNITY HEALTH

### Community Health & our work

As India's investments in health have been growing over the past decade and the National Health Mission has been seeking to expand availability of healthcare, the main challenge remains to ensure access in service utilization by all, especially the poor. BSWI works at the family, community, institutional and government levels to bridge the gap between service providers and service users. It helps deprived communities acquire information, knowledge and capacity to access healthcare services. Trained and motivated local women, organized in Self-Help Groups or acting as community-level workers, interact with families to facilitate access to primary health care services for women and children residing in villages. We educate communities in issues relating to child health, reproductive and sexual health, and appropriate hygienic practices to prevent common illnesses at home. We motivate families to seek full immunization coverage, periodic ante-natal check-ups and diagnostic tests during pregnancy, and early treatment in case of illness. We pay special attention to adolescent health, addressing reproductive and sexual health to prevent sexually transmitted diseases, early and unwanted pregnancy.

*Health education is the development of individual, group, institutional, community and systemic strategies to improve health knowledge, attitudes, skills and behaviour. The purpose of health education is to positively influence the health behaviour of individuals and communities as well as the living and working conditions that influence their health.*

### Nutrition & our work

Malnutrition is more widespread in India than in Sub-Saharan Africa. One in every three malnourished children in the world lives in India. About 50 per cent of all childhood deaths are attributed to malnutrition, according to UNICEF. As many as 48% of Indian children under the age of 5 are stunted that is a sign of chronic malnutrition. Girl children are more vulnerable than boys to malnutrition and mortality (NFHS 3, 2005-2006).

Our ultimate aim is to ensure full physical and mental growth and development in children by ensuring appropriate nutrition throughout the critical periods of the life cycle. Our interventions seek to address a variety of determinants of malnutrition in children, adolescents and pregnant women, as they relate to healthcare, hygiene and sanitation, child care, appropriate feeding practices (including breastfeeding), growth monitoring and promotion, adoption of low-cost home available foods, promotion of gender equality. In addition to promoting community-based nutrition interventions, we care for severely malnourished children.

*The problem of malnutrition is not always as straightforward as simply lack of food. Many families do not always share food equally among their members. Mothers and infants, especially girls, are rarely given priority. Traditionally, in Indian families, women eat last. When food is scarce, men may receive more than women, boys more than girls, older children more than younger children. Diet may be imbalanced owing to limited understanding of nutrition as much as lack of food availability. For example, less than half of Indian children under six months are exclusively breastfed (NFHS 3, 2005-2006).*

During the year, we have carried out our work in nutrition in partnership with

- ⇒ The family – to promote pregnancy weight gain through appropriate feeding and caring practices of pregnant women, breastfeeding promotion, introducing semi-solid low-cost nutritious foods from six months onward in the child's diet (in terms of improved food quantity, quality and frequency), safe water and hygienic practices, early seeking of health care for childhood ailments, adequate feeding of girls and women, and empowerment of women to choose for themselves and their children



- ⇒ The community – to enhance health and nutrition education involving women’s groups and local elected members of Panchayat Institutions, promote environmental sanitation, including use of toilets, maintenance of drainage and safe disposal of solid waste, prevent early marriage and pregnancy
- ⇒ Institutional services – to ensure referral and treatment of severely malnourished children to our health clinic and the Government hospitals.

### Health education & our work

Low cost preventive measures are the core of our community health program. Improved health habits, positive attitude building in health care and protection, reduced gender discrimination and child survival and development and development of motherhoods are the primary agendas of our works in this sector. Awareness generation on child survival and protection, women’s health aspects, adolescent health behaviour and issues are our focus areas and we have been working on this since last three decades. We believe that Health Education improves the health status of individuals, families, communities, states, and the nation. Health education enhances the quality of life for all people and reduces premature deaths. By focusing on prevention, health education reduces the costs (both financial and human) that individuals, employers, families, insurance companies, medical facilities, communities, the state and the nation would spend on medical treatment.

*Poverty is perhaps the worst form of violence against children. In a country where 40 per cent of the population is poor, vulnerability to various forms of deprivation potentially affects almost one in two children. The number of children involved in work which seriously damages their education and holistic development is unknown, but estimates range from 12.6 million, as estimated by the government (Census 2001), to 60-115 million children, as claimed by civil society organizations.*

### Our activities during the year

- ⇒ We have conducted 236 village based orientation camps on RCH in 20 villages
- ⇒ We have conducted 15 Nutrition Demonstration Camps in 15 villages to improve nutrition awareness and preparing nutritious foods from locally available food (cereal, rice, wheat, pulses etc.)
- ⇒ We have conducted 2 SHG workshops and staff trainings/orientation in the main centre on preventable diseases like diarrhoea, water-borne diseases and filth, insect borne diseases like malaria, worm infestation etc.
- ⇒ Through our health clinic we have provided medical aid at subsidised prices to 198 poor patients who were unable to afford to the full cost of medicines.
- ⇒ We have provided free eye check-ups and distribution of spectacles to more than 400 needy and poor villagers of twenty villages in Diamond Harbour, Kulpi and Magrahat blocks receiving CSR support from GKB Optical.

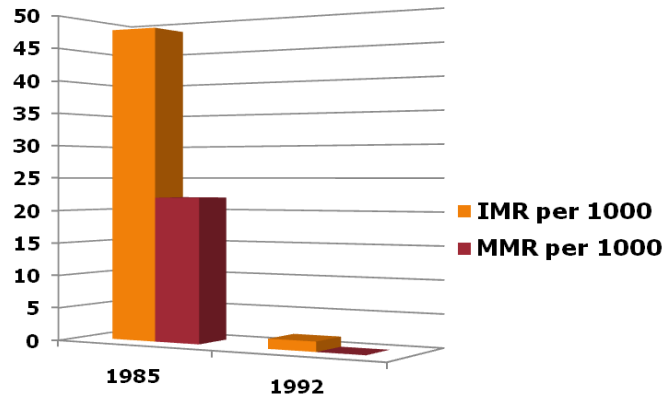
### BSWI’s Future Perspectives:

- To establish a Nutrition Rehabilitation Centre (NRC) to provide care for severely malnourished children where balanced food would be provided in small but frequent amounts in order to increase a child’s weight safely over a period of several weeks
- To work with run-away, missing, sexually and physically abused children, at risk of early marriage, out of school, or victims of other forms of violence. BSWI is keen to open a Child Protection Resource Centre that would coordinate program activities and foster innovation in both institutional and community-based child protection work.
- To offer education and protection services to children who are most vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and trafficking in the districts of South 24 Parganas and Malda. There is acute need to implement several programs along the borders of India with Bangladesh where child trafficking is a serious as much as an elusive problem.
- To offer services for eye-care for the inhabitants of the remote rural areas of Malda district to protect the people from severe eyesight losses.
- To work for the differently-able persons, especially the children, in both South 24 Parganas and Malda district through Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) approaches and centre-based support services like special education, physiotherapy, occupational therapies etc.

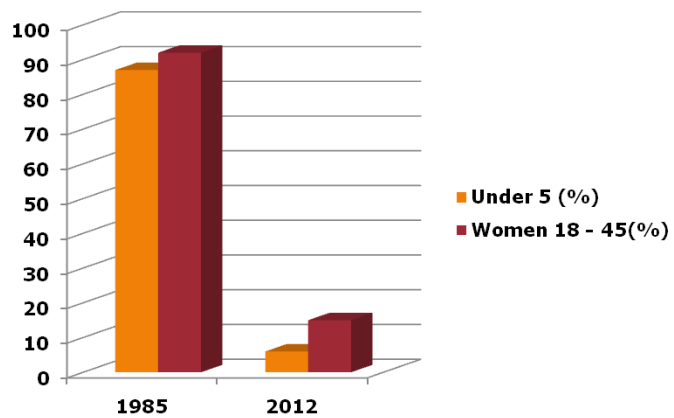


## BSWI'S ACHIEVEMENT IN HEALTH SECTOR

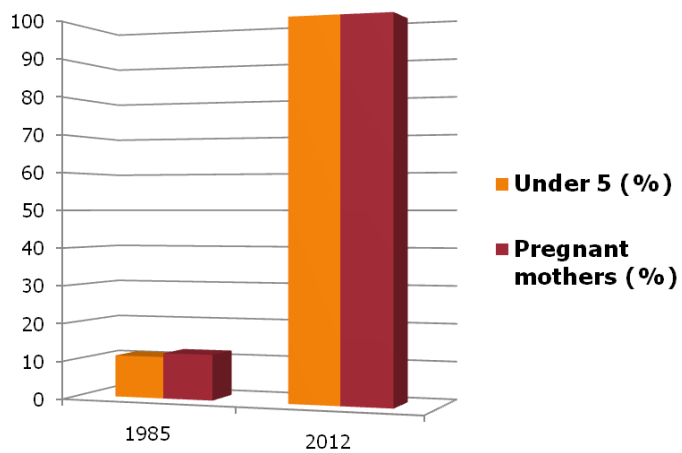
Status of mortality rate of infant and mothers over the years in BSWI's project area



Comparative status of malnourishment of children and women over the years in BSWI's project area



Increase of immunization status over the years in BSWI's project area



## SECTOR: LIVELIHOOD DEVELOPMENT & BASIC NEEDS

BSWI aims at enhancing the socio-economic status of the poor, especially women and disadvantaged groups. BSWI has adopted a three-pronged approach to achieve its objective:

- ⇒ Strengthening economic organizations of the poor to be more self-reliant and achieve better livelihoods for members;
- ⇒ Enable women's' groups to play a more vocal role in local decision-making and help them sustainably access financial services from public and private financial institutions for establishing economically viable small to medium scale enterprises;
- ⇒ Increase incomes of the majority of the poor members of SHGs through enhanced rural livelihood by financing capacity building measures and developing market linkages.

### Project Principles

- Economic – all interventions are to be designed to ensure improved cost-effectiveness and increased economic return to the community members;
- Institutional - effective utilization of existing mechanism (district, block level staff and federation members) for delivering and monitoring services at the project level;
- Social - improved capacity of communities to organize them to identify their needs and access support to meet these needs;
- Participation - increased focus on involving communities in a participatory manner.

### Issues & Challenges BSWI addressed

- To foster a process of change in favour of the rural poor through building and managing appropriate and innovative local level institutions based on their rights and rooted in values of justice, equity and mutual support.
- To recreate a self-sustaining and environmentally clean habitat and the institutions to sustain it based on a balanced perspective of the relationship between natural resources and the legitimate needs of people.
- To promote people's institutions, strategies and skills through which poor families are able to exercise their rights to develop their livelihood strategies and to secure the rights of the marginalized sectors.
- To promote convergence in the Panchayat Raj Institutions that addresses the issues related to poverty and resource distribution for alleviating poverty.
- To strengthen networks and linkages between and among formal and informal institutions that can foster and sustain the impact of development initiatives.

*India's strong economic growth has consistently sought to include the rural poor, who are concentrated in areas where rainfed agriculture is the main economic activity. However, poverty persists because of limited and inequitable access to productive resources, such as land, water, improved inputs and technologies and microfinance, as well as vulnerability to drought and other natural. Low levels of literacy and skills conspire to keep people in the poverty trap, preventing them from claiming their basic rights or from embarking on new activities to earn income or build assets.*

The various activities during the year have been as follows:

1. SHGs and microfinance
  - a. Promotion of SHGs and a federation
  - b. Training and capacity building of SHG leaders
  - c. Encouraging income generation activities through SHGs
2. Agricultural development (including horticulture and pisciculture)
  - a. Promotion of SRI (System of Rice Intensification)
  - b. Encouraging vegetable cultivation
  - c. Digging individual seepage tanks
  - d. Renovating community ponds for irrigation and fisheries
  - e. Release of mortgaged lands
  - f. Promotion of livestock rearing



- g. Training and awareness raising of farmers
- h. Exploring market linkages and value additions

3. "Gaon Chalo" project of Tata Global Beverages Limited (TGBL)

- With a view to facilitate the SHG members and local rural unemployed youths, BSWI has been associated with the TGBL by registering a Company in the name of the SHG Federation that sells Tata Tea and raise their incomes. So far, BSWI has increased its outreach to four districts, i.e., Murshidabad, South Dinajpur and North Dinajpur.

4. Promotion of Animal Husbandry amongst the SHG members:

In the main centre's farm house in Baradrone village, BSWI has been organizing animal husbandry training cum demonstration activities for the SHG members and each year it has been training about 350 women members of the SHGs. After the completion of the training programs, BSWI also helps them setting up their household units and so far more than 1300 small household livestock units have been set up in 1300 families around Diamond Harbour and Kulpi block of South 24 Parganas district.

Promotion of the SHGs has been the principal activity of BSWI. It began its work in Gajole-II Panchayat through the means of women's SHGs. There has been a gradual growth of SHGs and at present 93 groups are operational in twenty villages with a total membership of around 1152 women. Their combined savings till March 2016 was Rs. 12,12,100. Forty groups established bank linkages and had solicited around Rs. 17,00,000 as loans from banks. The significance of the SHGs lies in the fact that they are not just women's organizations but are also the rallying points around which all the activities are organized. The beneficiaries for most of the programs (agricultural, horticultural and animal husbandry schemes) are selected through the SHGs and the benefits are channeled through the groups.

Among the agricultural programs the most innovative activity has been that of SRI. BSWI introduced this technique in the project area since 2012 to enhance the productivity of rice. In 2015, more than 450 farmers followed this technique and multiplied the production by 1.5 times. As an incentive to adopt to this technique, BSWI has been providing seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and technical expertise to the participating farmers.

Second activity in this category has been that of vegetable cultivation. Although farmers were in the habit of taking a vegetable crop alongside or after the main kharif crop of paddy, this was not being attempted systematically. Small and marginal farmers were constrained due to lack of irrigation. BSWI encouraged vegetable cultivation as a supplementary livelihood activity and provided seeds, saplings, seedlings and fertilizers. In 2015, more than 200 farmers cultivated vegetables on 50 acres with BSWI support.

In order to augment a captive source of water, BSWI supported digging of small, field level tanks in individual farms. The farmers could irrigate their small vegetable plots with this storage. The annual target of the project has been to construct 15 tanks in the project area. This is coupled with supporting the deepening of community ponds. As mentioned earlier, Gajole block has more than 500 such ponds but many of them have been silted. The project envisaged deepening of the ponds by providing wage-labor costs. In 2015, ten ponds were deepened which benefited more than 110 families by way of irrigation and fisheries.

Considering the high incidence of land-mortgaging, BSWI encouraged releasing of the lands and encouraged SHGs to advance loans to the needy families. Other associated activities included encouraging goat rearing as a supplementary livelihood measure, providing loans for setting up petty-businesses and establishing market access for the vegetable growers. In order to explore the potential of marketing the local produce, BSWI commissioned a study on 'Livelihood Options with Market Mapping and Value Chain Analysis'. This was undertaken in June 2015 and its recommendations are being materialized by BSWI now. Training and capacity building of farmers and other beneficiaries has also been an on-going project activity.

As per the evaluation of BSWI's activities in Malda district, the following recommendations have been received by BSWI and these are being addressed with significant priorities. The recommendations were:

- To ensure the sustainability of the interventions, BSWI needs to make a correct assessment of what component of the Trusts' grant could be ploughed back into the SHGs and institutionally how this could be monitored. There is potential that part of the assistance provided under different schemes (SRI, Vegetable cultivation, Seepage tanks, Community ponds, goat-rearing, etc) could be returned to the SHGs whereby their corpus could be developed and the activities could be carried out beyond the project period. A correct system of assessing this potential be instituted at this juncture and the capital be monitored quarterly.

- For fulfilling the desired target of reaching up to 2,700 odd target families, the number of SHGs needs to be increased. Additionally, an avenue may be found to help the needy families not within the purview of the SHGs. If necessary the Project may go beyond the boundary of Gajole-II Panchayat and cover additional villages, within the same budget and human resource.
- To enhance the operational efficiency of the Project, the current human resource may be appropriately deployed so that their potential is fully utilized and additional families/villages can be covered. The Cluster Coordinators may be encouraged to extend their technical expertise to the adjoining panchayats to popularize SRI, vegetable cultivation and deepening of community ponds. Similarly, older and experienced VLWs may be encouraged to promote SHGs in other panchayats.
- BSWI may reassess the extent of land mortgaging among the target populations and redesign the interventions so that none of the lands remain mortgaged. Appropriate programmatic measures may be designed in consultation with SHGs.
- BSWI may encourage the beneficiaries and other citizens to organize 'Gram Sansads' in the respective villages and facilitate local self-governance. The citizens may be encouraged to activate the 'Gram Unnayan Samiti' to undertake various natural resource based income and employment generation measures and ensure the provision of basic civic amenities. (The West Bengal Panchayat Act, 2003 may be carefully studied).
- BSWI may also encourage the beneficiaries and their associations (SHGs and other collectives) to press for the implementation of the 'Right to Food', 'Right to Education', 'Right to Employment' and 'Right to Information'. The staff may be first informed about these rights and how to put them into action.
- BSWI may also explore the possibility of implementing the 'Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 and the Biological Diversity Act, 2002. These Acts would not only empower the target group populations in their struggle for property rights but would also pave way for enhancing livelihoods. Of particular importance is the Bio-Diversity Act which would enable the residents to protect, conserve and manage the local biological resources.
- BSWI may also encourage the people and their collectives to insist upon their other endowments i.e. schemes under the NREGA, TSP, ITDP, IRDP and others. For this purpose the training and capacity building agenda may be separately designed. If needed, district level advocacy may be undertaken in association with other organizations.
- For enhancing the value chains, the recommendations made in the EDP study may be considered and implemented. Of particular importance is the intervention with regard to mango trees. A special programmatic measure may be undertaken to prevent the distress sale of mango trees and enable the beneficiary to realize the full value of this asset. Similarly, the recommendation for undertaking composting and reducing the use of chemical fertilizers may be acted upon.
- The SHG procedures may be standardized and printed stationary may be provided to the groups. The training and capacity building agenda may also be suitably modified in the light of the suggestions made above. Social issues may be given priority and the members may be empowered to take part in local governance functions.
- The federation of SHGs may be instituted only when the stakeholders are fully conversant with the idea and had acquired the necessary competence to run the organization.
- The goat scheme may be redesigned to make optimal use of the available funds and to cover maximum beneficiaries possible.
- Equitable water sharing arrangements may be instituted on all the community ponds assisted by the Project and the same may be guided and monitored to ensure sustainability. Pilot experiments may be made which could be replicated subsequently.
- Work among youth may be initiated and youth groups be promoted in target villages.
- Training and capacity building agenda for project staff may be suitably redesigned in the light of the suggestions made above.

## BSWI'S ACTIVITIES IN LIVELIHOOD DEVELOPMENT



Chilimpur: Sagen Sakam SHG Beneficiary



Agriculture: Sustainability Matters



Petty Shop: Deserving



Goat Rearing Unit



Community Ponds



Seepage Ponds



Village Market Stall



Vegetable Cultivation



SRI Sowing in Process



Mango Cultivation



Composite vegetable cultivation



Pond-based economy

## SECTOR: ORGANISATION BUILDING

BSWI mobilized groups of tribal and socially backward communities against exploitation and addressed the socio-economic issues in its project area. For the last ten years BSWI has focused on community based development with the following objectives:

- ⇒ Assist people in obtaining basic development and infrastructure facilities for education, health care, drinking water, and housing.
- ⇒ Encourage sustainable development with regard to natural resources.
- ⇒ Raise consciousness of legal rights among the stakeholders.
- ⇒ Organize tribal communities to resist exploitation, assert their rights and control their natural resources.
- ⇒ Promote accountable, grassroots-level institutions for socio-economic independence and self-governance.

### **BSWI addressed the following challenges of its project areas:**

- Land alienation, exploitation by non-tribal groups, industrialization and displacement, state violation of constitutional and protective legislation
- Loss of control over natural resources and rights to decision-making
- Economic exploitation and abuse by moneylenders and traders
- Ill-health and inaccessibility of health services resulting in high mortality;
- Inadequate and substandard educational facilities with a very high drop-out rate at the school level particularly, of girl children.

### **BSWI has carried out the following activities during the year:**

#### 1. Capacity building

BSWI, with its long-standing experience in community organization, provided capacity building support to small groups and local organizations working for people's rights as they find it difficult to obtain information and inputs on their own. BSWI assisted four hundred community based SHGs and producers' collectives in its different project areas in capacity building, education and health, legal aid, linkages, information and documentation, organization management, financial support, campaign support, marketing and technical expertise.

#### 2. Support to Development Activities

BSWI implements development programs in the project villages through local community participation to meet their basic requirements of housing, drinking water, education, health services, etc. by linking up with either government departments like SC & ST Welfare, Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, or with institutions/organizations concerned with the development of the vulnerable groups. BSWI has also encouraged communities to build up local sustainable institutions for over-coming exploitation through women's thrift societies, producers' collectives (mango, fish, goats etc.), health and education committees and farmers' associations.

#### 3. Information support

Communities affected by private or government projects have a right to information on these projects and their likely impacts. Information should also be accessible to local groups and communities on legal rights, laws and regulations, and other programs relevant to them. As there is an information-vacuum due to reluctance from government and industries in sharing it, BSWI collects information, compiles into brief informative documents and disseminates it. Demystifying legal and technical information, particularly in the context of development projects and spreading this literature in the vernacular is another important activity of BSWI.

#### 4. Linkages

Small local groups need to come out of their isolated struggles as issues affecting people are based on micro-level policies of the state. BSWI, with its experience and access to other people's networks helps local struggles by providing linkages to larger movements and fora so as to build up a strong lobby support for the issues in the regions.

#### 5. Technical expertise and alternatives

BSWI supported small organizations and communities with technical expertise in seeking alternative sustainable development designs which can be managed by the communities. This includes harnessing locally available natural resources for meeting basic needs of food, income and employment. With the help of the technical experts BSWI also took up impact assessment studies and gave constructive alternatives which are ecologically and socially enduring and press for balanced development.

#### 6. Research and Documentation

BSWI took up research, studies and prepared reports on issues related to tribals/scheduled areas, environment, human rights, land alienation, rural development programs, legal issues, etc. Some of the studies undertaken by BSWI have been on the impact of the Natural Resource Management, Business development by local producers, Long Term Perspective Planning, and feasibility studies for micro-finance project.

*The United Nations Development Programme constituted eight Millennium Development Goals (MDG) for ensuring equity and peace across the world. The third MDG is directly related to the empowerment of women in India. The MDGs are agreed-upon goals to reduce certain indicators of disparity across the world by the year 2015. The third MDG is centred towards promoting gender equality and empowering women: "Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education by no later than 2015". While India's progress in this front has been brave, there are quite a few corners that it needs to cut before it can be called as being truly revolutionary in its quest for understanding what women empowerment is. As UNDP says, "India missed the 2005 deadline of eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education. However, as the Government of India MDG Report 2009 notes, "participation of women in employment and decision-making remains far less than that of men, and the disparity is not likely to be eliminated by 2015." Achieving GPI in tertiary education also remains a challenge. In addition, the labour market openness to women in industry and services has only marginally increased from 13-18 percent between 1990-91 and 2004-05.*

### Women's Empowerment

The overall objective of this sector is to empower women to fight against poverty, exploitation and subjugation and enable them involve fully in development activities to meet the millennium development goals. The specific objectives of the project are to empower women and young girls economically and educationally to enable them participate in development activities, initiate the community to advocate for support and education of girls, to increase the enrolment of girls in the school, to change the life of poor women and their families through revolving fund provision and empower their households economically.

### Social Empowerment

BSWI has carried out major activities like conducting community mobilization workshop for different community members and reducing harmful traditional practices, educational support to poor in school girls, revolving fund provision for poor women and engaging them in different income generating activities, training self-help group members in income generating activities, formation and strengthening of women's producers' groups and women-farmers' clubs. BSWI has worked in 47 villages of South 24 Parganas, Malda and West Medinipur districts of West Bengal for a total of 345 self Help Groups (SHGs) of women. During this year, BSWI has promoted 56 SHGs in these areas. A total of 5165 women from the marginalised sections have participated this activity. During the year, BSWI has conducted the following activities for the members of the SHGs in the villages:

*In India, women are devalued traditionally and the men are normative reified. According to Hindu mythology, the word 'Ardhanarishvara' meaning "The Lord whose half is a woman". We need both male and female each other. We must work all together and both needs each other to survive and flourish. Women should also be in place of man in today's society. As they are now highly qualified, make remarkable contributions to the economy through their paid work. They work in a wide variety of professions around the country from teachers and secretaries to welders and doctors to machine operators and child care workers too.*

- BSWI has conducted 25 community mobilization workshop for different community members, educational support to poor in-school girls, awarding outstanding girl students, revolving fund provision for poor women and engaging them in different income generating schemes, training women farmers in agro-based income generating activities and providing them with revolving fund.
- Different activities have been conducted such as advocacy and sensitization workshops for community, religious and women representatives and concerned bodies on gender equality, human rights (women's right) and child rights.
- Sensitization workshop for religious and local leaders: BSWI organised workshops for community representatives on women's rights and gender equality. Twelve similar workshops have been conducted in the year in different locations where more than 670 such persons participated. The participants of the workshops after completion of the workshop and when back to their residence localities have taught the community they lead. This activity was intended to bring change in attitude of the community towards women, reduce violence of their rights, and ensure their equality.

*India as a country is still recovering from years of abuse in the time of the Raj and more years of economic suffering at the hands of the License Raj. It is only now that globalization, liberalization and other socio-economic forces have given some respite to a large proportion of the population. However, there are still quite a few areas where women empowerment in India is largely lacking. To truly understand what women empowerment is, there needs to be a sea-change in the mind-set of the people in the country. Not just the women themselves, but the men have to wake up to a world that is moving towards equality and equity. It is better that this is embraced earlier rather than later, for our own good. Our country should be catapulted into the horizon of empowerment of women and revel in its glory. We have a long way to go, but we will get there someday. We shall overcome.*

### **Economic empowerment**

**Formation of SHGs:** BSWI has utilized a cadre of trained leaders of existing SHGs to expand the social mobilization to new pockets in adjoining blocks. The activities involved were:

#### **Micro-Credit:**

Supporting poor women through provision of revolving fund: BSWI through its SHGs, supported 3412 women with micro-finance averaging from Rs. 2000 to Rs. 5000 for doing various household income generating activities. The activities they practiced were paddy processing, puffed rice making, cereal packaging, rice packaging, paper bag making, net making, vegetable growing and selling, tea stalls, small eateries, tailoring and embroidering, woollen garments making and selling, household poultry, inland fisheries, goat rearing, pig rearing, cattle rearing, milk vending, utensils vending and series of small enterprises. The money that was paid back by former beneficiaries has been given for the other poor women during the year who were in the waiting lists.

#### **Capacity building:** SHG & Federation members

The group members/leaders, Federation leaders were provided training and orientation in leadership, gender, rights, communication skills, group dynamics, managerial aspects, maintaining accounts, PIME and regulation of their savings and credit program. BSWI also organised workshops that had the twin participation of both the women's SHGs and the Federation members as well as the leaders of the Panchayats, banks and government officials. As a result of these training, orientation and workshops on different social and economic aspects, the confidence of the members of the women's SHGs and Federation members increased.

#### **Livelihood Planning:**

BSWI has worked with both men and women in the family, helping them to improve their livelihoods and access complementary services from public and private institutions. Combining PRA tools such as livelihood and resource mapping, interventions such as achievement motivation training, area planning and envisioning exercises, BSWI has helped SHG members and their families develop medium-term livelihood goals for themselves. Various participatory learning tools including pictorial-based methodologies were used to help women track and analyze events in their lives and livelihoods, while making plans for changes. Exercises have been conducted in groups as well as with each household. They were not one-time inputs to be given to the groups but were part of an ongoing engagement with the women.

#### **Strengthening Knowledge:**

The major intentions of BSWI in this sector have been to sensitize the target group women about their rights, gender dimensions, and responsibilities as the stakeholders in the development process through innovative awareness programs. BSWI has been



sensitive in this issue by, the final process of empowering the target group illiterate women to acquire functional literacy skills and to be equipped with various social-political-economic knowledge and capacities to be self-reliant. The role of knowledge building and improvement in capacity building cannot be undermined and the VADCs for the rural women were found to be the additives to the process of capacity building and empowerment of women.

### Group based Enterprises

BSWI promoted many self-help groups of women in its project villages. The members of the self-help groups need earning from rural enterprises. BSWI realised that it could train and provide economic benefits in various animal rearing activities with its expertise and dedicated manpower by setting up the enterprise units. Since then, the units have not only demonstrated viable enterprises to the local women, but also provided training, technical support and guidance to other NGOs / Panchayat Bodies. BSWI has been able to provide training in various enterprises and facilitated setting up of their own enterprises to hundreds of women who have been able to cross the acute poverty line. The programs are: Dairy, Poultry, Fishery, Duck rearing, Goat rearing, Jute bag knitting, woollen garments knitting, Foam bag making, embroidery, tailoring, improved Mat making, Food Processing etc. In all these units, 426 women are working and getting remunerative incomes. The enterprise programs are run and managed by the producers' groups under the supervision of our organization.



### BSWI's Future Perspectives (as recommended in the Review Report)

While cautioning that local solutions must be developed, the reviewers also felt confident that five key success factors could be identified from effective initiatives occurring in very different sets of circumstances. These five key success factors are:

1. *'Capacity Building*, focusing on education and the development of human and social capital and increased connectedness.
2. *A Linked Approach*, involving co-ordination across government portfolios, partnerships between people and government (local, block and district levels), and partnerships between government, business, community and philanthropic sectors.
3. An emphasis on *Local Democracy*, whereby bottom-up initiatives take priority over solutions imposed from outside, and the importance of local identity, leadership, knowledge and management are recognized as critical components.
4. *Flexible Approaches* that take regard of the multifaceted nature of the problems that face particular communities and which emphasize the importance of continuous reflection and development.
5. An emphasis on *Sustainable Strategies* rather than one-off projects, and (strategies) which recognise the ongoing interdependency of social, economic and environmental connectedness.'

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**SIR DORABJI TATA TRUST AND THE ALLIED TRUSTS**



## **BSWI's Inspirations**



*"He only lives who lives for others' – Swami Vivekananda*



*"Do not say, "It is morning," and dismiss it with a name of yesterday. See it for the first time as a new-born child that has no name." – Rabindranath Tagore*



*"Let us always meet each other with smile, for the smile is the beginning of love." ---  
Mother Teresa*



*"See the good in people and help them ...Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever" ----- Mahatma Gandhi*



*"Honor your daughters. They are honorable" - Malala Yousafzai, Nobel Peace Prize Winner of Pakistan*



*"The solution to women's issues can only be achieved in a free and democratic society in which human energy is liberated, the energy of both women and men together" - Tawakkol Karman, Nobel Peace Prize Winner of Yemen*

