BARADRONE SOCIAL WELFARE INSTITUTION (BSWI)

Reaching the Unreached

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

HUMBLE SUBMISSION OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Dear friends, members and well-wishers,

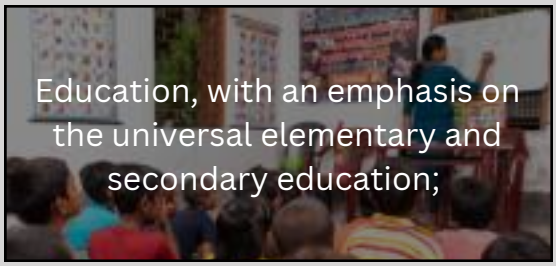
We are delighted to present this Annual Report for 2021-2022 with the details of our activities implemented during this year. We have also tried our best to give you the correct and complete information about the programs as well as the process of the administrative aspects. I do hope you like the presentation, and in case you have any suggestions to upgrade our work, please feel free to let us know. Your valuable feedback would be highly appreciated, as we have always done.
We sincerely thank everyone who has joined hands with the BSWI's activities and goals to help our dreams become realities.
With kind regards,

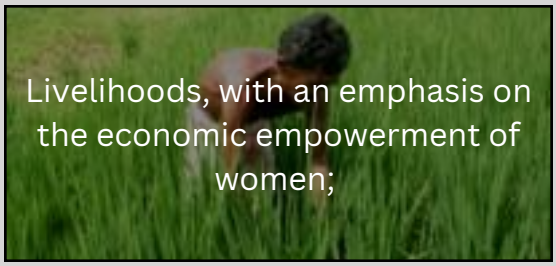
Yours sincerely,

Sanjib Bhattacharya
Baradrone, 24 Pgs (S),
July 21, 2022

INTRODUCTION ABOUT THE ORGANISATION – BSWI

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





Vision

- To contribute to building a society where all people can gain access to education, health care, and employment opportunities and where people can realise their full potential;
- To build a trusted bridge between the dreams and aspirations of individuals who care about suffering people and their realisation;
- To build a secular, transparent, credible and accountable organisation.

Mission

To empower individuals, families, communities and society by helping ensure their rights to live and help them overcome the barriers of poverty, illiteracy and well-being.

Details of the Executive Committee members of BSWI (As on 31st March 2022)

Sl. No.	Name	Address	Position in the committee
1	Mrs Sachita Sarkar	Vill. & P.O. Baradrone, Block – Diamond Harbour, Dist. South 24 Parganas, West Bengal, 743332.	President & Trustee
2	Mr Anadi Naskar	-do-	Vice- President & Trustee
3	Mr Sanjib Bhattacharya	-do-	General Secretary & Trustee
4	Mrs Arati Sarkar	-do-	Asst Secretary & Trustee
5	Mr Debaprasad Chakraborty	-do-	Member
6	Mrs Dipali Bhattacharya	-do-	Member
7	Mr Haran Chandra Paik	-do-	Treasurer & Trustee
8	Mr Gour Gopal Naskar	-do-	Member & Trustee
9	Mr Prasanta Kr. Mitra	-do-	Member & Trustee
10	Mr Swapan Bikash Naskar	-do-	Member & Trustee
11	Hare Krishna Mondal	-do-	Member

Operational Sectors

- Education & Life Counselling
- Healthful Living & Wellness
- Economic Advancement & Basic Necessities
- Organisation Building & Empowerment

Objectives

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

Details of the Executive Committee Members of BSWI (As on 31st March 2022)

West Bengal

Sl. No.	Districts	Blocks & villages	Target populations reached
1.	South 24 Parganas	Diamond Harbour I, Magrahat, Kulpi & Namkhana (40 villages)	42,000
2.	Malda	Gajole (12 villages)	28,000
3.	North Dinajpur	Kaliaganj (36 villages)	33,000

Jharkhand

Sl. No.	Districts	Blocks & villages	Target populations reached
1.	Sahibganj	Taljhari	24600
2.		Rajmahal	17800

Other Informations

Position	Salary & Benefits	Amount per month	Highest paid staff (CEO)	Lowest paid staff
Director	Honorarium & Allowances	Rs. 60,000/-	Rs. 25,500/-	Rs. 8,000/-

Remuneration and Reimbursements to Board Members:

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

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

SECTOR:
EDUCATION & LIFE COUNSELLING

BSWI supports the Right to Education Bill of 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 due to traditional or social barriers such as caste, poverty, gender or ability. Evidence shows that children who are in school are not only 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 are 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.

Children receiving free books.

To prevent dropping out, we offer remedial education services through coaching centres run on school premises or in the community. Services are in operation before 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 the 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 keep children, particularly girls, out of school.

A pre-primary class in progress

Having worked in various strings of education since 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 schooling 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 their wards. An outsider will not be able to distinguish between the situations in the areas in 1976 and now in 2022.

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, hundreds of girls and boys are attending high schools and even college education due to our constant work in the educational sphere.

Core Activities

Sl. No.	Activities	Quantity	Villages covered
1.	Book grants to needy students	138 students (112 girls)	22 villages
2.	Bridge Education Program for dropout girls	300 students	10 villages
3.	School materials (bags, kits, uniforms etc.)	128 students (102 girls)	25 villages
4.	Community meetings on girls' education	127 meetings	28 villages
5.	Meetings with government school teachers	21 meetings	32 villages
6.	Tuition fees provided	26 girls	18 villages

Sl. No.	Activities	Quantity	Villages covered
7.	Readmitted drop out girls in high schools	16 girls	6 villages
8.	School admission fees provided	117 girls	32 villages

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 more BLCs (Bridge Learning Centres) for such students with a focus on 'Inclusive Education for all'.
- A holistic approach for Inclusive education for differently-abled children in its project areas because not much work has been done in this field by BSWI.
- Opening Vocational and professionally oriented coaching centres are needed as a future path to the success of the education programs of BSWI.
- Opening a TTC (Teacher Training College) on the campus of BSWI 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 that charge absorbent amounts that the target group cannot afford.
- Expansion of the BSWI's education models to unexplored villages where drop-out rates, teen marriages, and level of child labouring are 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.

SECTOR: HEALTHFUL LIVING & WELLNESS

BSWI's Future Perspectives:

As India's investments in health have been growing over the past decade and the National Health Mission has been seeking to expand the availability of healthcare, the main challenge remains to ensure access to 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 on 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 and early and unwanted pregnancy.

Awareness program on adolescent Health & sanitation

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. According to UNICEF, about 50% of all childhood deaths are attributed to malnutrition. As many as 48% of Indian children under the age of 5 are stunted, which is a sign of chronic malnutrition. Girl children are more vulnerable than boys to malnutrition and mortality (NFHS 3, 2005-2006).

Nutritious food preparation from locally available resources

Our ultimate aim is to ensure complete physical and mental growth and development in children by providing 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.

We have carried out our work in nutrition in partnership with

- **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

During the year,

- **The family –** to promote pregnancy weight gain through appropriate feeding and caring practices of pregnant women, breastfeeding promotion, and 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
- **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 the development of motherhood are the primary agendas of our work 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 for the 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.

Celebrating World Health Day

Our activities

- We have conducted 236 village-based orientation camps on Reproductive Child Health (RCH) in 20 villages.
- We have conducted 15 Nutrition Demonstration Camps in 15 villages to improve nutrition awareness and prepare nutritious foods from locally available food (cereal, rice, wheat, pulses, etc.)
- We have conducted 2 Self Help Group (SHG) workshops and staff training/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 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 a company named GKB Optical.

Menstruation Management

Women attending hygiene awareness program

Menstruation is an inevitable part of most women's and adolescent girls' lives. The average woman would observe menstruation every month of her life for approximately 35 years. Considering their health and hygiene, the economic costs for the average woman/adolescent are staggering, especially in our country.

Menstrual cycles are tied to reproductive health as well as other aspects of women's health. With menstruation comes menstrual practices, and a key part of good health for women is hygienic menstrual practices. This is an issue that fails to receive proper attention. Hygienic menstrual practices include the use of sanitary pads during menstrual flows. Sadly, most women and adolescent girls are unable to have access to essential products that can help maintain their menstrual health either because they are too expensive or they are unavailable, especially in remote rural areas (forests, islands, etc.). They are, therefore, forced to resort to unhygienic menstrual practices. Unhygienic menstrual practices include the use of tissue paper, newspaper, rags, cotton wool, and even the use of damaged reusable absorbent pads.

Our activities

- We have taught the girls about hygiene in the following means: (a) Always wipe from front to back. (b) Never use perfumed vaginal products. (c) Wash your towel, washcloth, and bed linen regularly. (d) Brush and floss daily. (e) Wear clean clothes at night. (f) Take the time to wash your face. (g) Don't overdo the perfume.

Demo on usage of sanitary pads

- We have done hygiene promotion through several means, ranging from face-to-face discussions, media campaigns, and poster displays to the creation of community health and hygiene groups that share information and stories on hygiene promotion.

- We have worked to increase awareness among adolescent girls on Menstrual Hygiene, to increase access to and use of good/standard-quality sanitary napkins for adolescent girls in our rural areas, and to ensure safe disposal of Sanitary Napkins in an environmentally friendly manner.

- It is critical that the usage of sanitary pads over cloth begins in elementary school. We have given sanitary pads to the girls in our project area, and we have encouraged them to use them instead of cloth. We have educated the girls in maintaining the highest level of hygiene during periods.

Drinking Water Program

BSWI aims to promote sustainable water resources management in remote rural areas by helping communities implement effective strategies for water management through the dissemination of scientifically sound systems, scientific knowledge and information on new and innovative approaches, solutions and tools for sustainable water management, as well as by providing capacity building support on key rural water issues.

Our activities

(a) Sustainable Water Management Strategies: BSWI aims to assess the effectiveness of, explore promising directions for, and identify sustainable water management strategies, including addressing rural infrastructure and water management, benchmarking of water services, protection of drinking water sources, water use and reuse, alternative technologies for sanitation, and use of natural treatment processes, supported by effective institutional arrangements and policies.

(b) Integrated Rural Water Infrastructure Provision: BSWI's project aims to promote new approaches to the poorest village improvements, focusing on integrated rural water services. (c) Best Practices in Rural Water Management: BSWI's project aims to promote and disseminate context - and scale-dependent best practices for assisting a variety of communities of various cultures and sizes to move away from current unsustainable water management practices towards more effective and sustainable rural water management.

In the last two years, BSWI has provided 34 hand pumps in 22 villages in three districts of West Bengal that cover more than 4500 villagers to get safe and potable drinking water. This has ensured better health and hygiene for the villagers and, more importantly, for the children.

Locals using handpump

Curative Care Unit

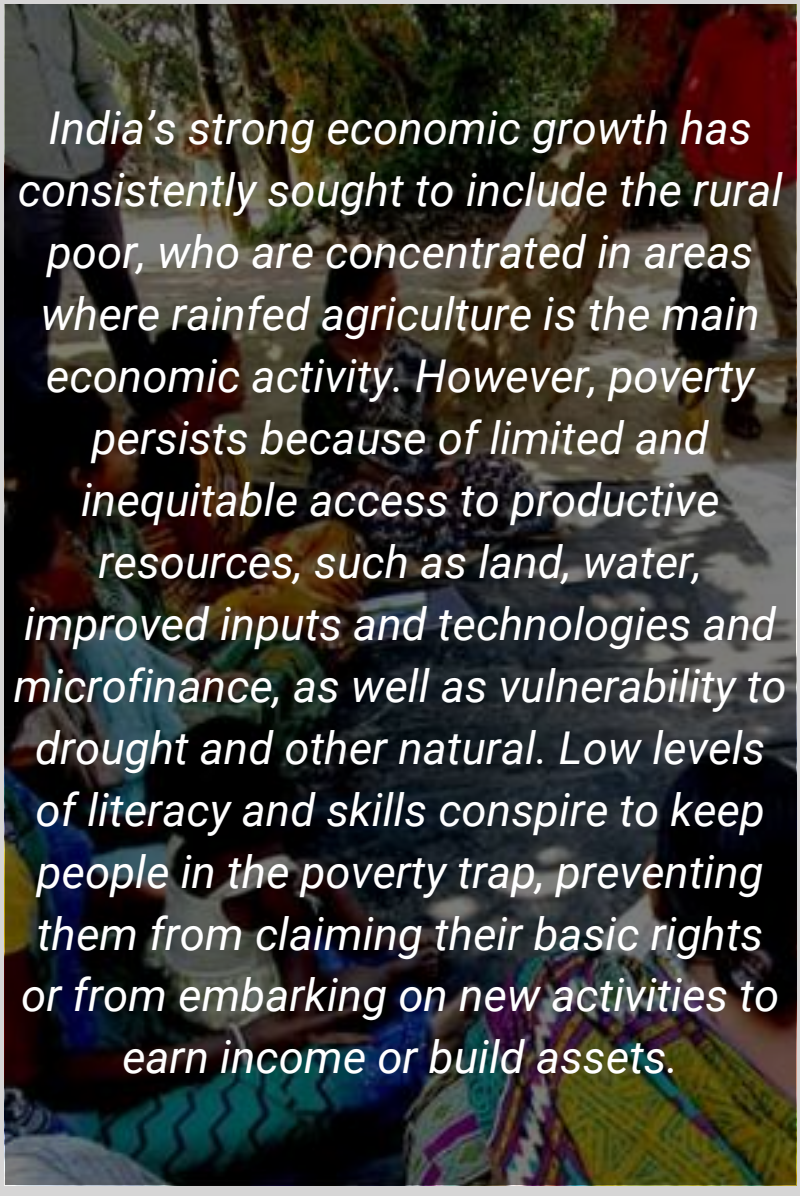
People getting health check up done

BSWI has a Health Clinic that reaches 35 villages, having more than 40000 beneficiaries who are provided first-aid and referral services by a local doctor who has adequate experience in providing health support to the poor and the needy. BSWI provides health support at a low-cost approach that helps the patients get good quality health support.

SECTOR:
ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT & BASIC NECESSITIES

BSWI has a Health Clinic that reaches 35 villages, having more than 40000 beneficiaries who are provided first-aid and referral services by a local doctor who has adequate experience in providing health support to the poor and the needy. BSWI provides health support at a low-cost approach that helps the patients get good quality health support.

- 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 mechanisms (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 address 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.

The various activities

1. SHGs and Microfinance

- Promotion of SHGs and a SHG Federation
- Training and capacity building of SHG leaders
- Encouraging income generation activities through SHGs
- Enterprise development programs for enhancing the incomes of women

2. Agricultural development (including horticulture and pisciculture)

Farmer working in the farm

- Promotion of SRI (System of Rice Intensification)
- Encouraging vegetable cultivation
- Digging individual seepage tanks
- Renovating community ponds for irrigation and fisheries
- Release of mortgaged lands
- Promotion of livestock rearing
- Training and awareness raising of farmers
- Exploring market linkages and value additions

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

With a view to facilitating 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 raises their incomes. So far, BSWI has increased its outreach to four districts, i.e., Murshidabad, South Dinajpur and North Dinajpur.

In the main centre's farmhouse 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 set 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.

It has been the principal activity of BSWI. It began its work in Gajole-II Panchayat of Malda district in West Bengal through the means of women's SHGs. There has been a gradual growth of SHGs, and at present, an odd 165 groups are operational in sixty-five villages with a total membership of around 1815 women. Their combined savings till March 2022 is Rs. 17,42,400. The SHG members are managing their own groups in decision-making and financial affairs. 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 channelled through the groups.

Among the agricultural programs, the most innovative activity has been that of the System of Rice Intensification (SRI). BSWI introduced this technique in the project area in 2012 to enhance the productivity of rice. In 2021, more than 450 farmers followed this technique and multiplied the production by 1.5 times. As an incentive to adopt this technique, BSWI has been providing seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and technical expertise to the participating farmers.

The second activity in this category has been 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 a lack of irrigation. BSWI encouraged vegetable cultivation as a supplementary livelihood activity and provided seeds, saplings, seedlings and fertilizers. During the year, more than 200 farmers cultivated vegetables on 50 acres with BSWI-Bank-Panchayat support. The Farmers' Club has set up Market Corners in several marketplaces for selling the products of the Farmers' Club members, and they are earning palpable incomes.

BSWI supported the 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-labour costs. During the year, 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 the releasing of the lands and encouraged SHGs to advance loans to 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 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 of Mango Cultivation'. The recommendations of the study are being materialized by BSWI now. Training and capacity building of farmers and other beneficiaries has also been an ongoing project activity.

Mango Cultivation

As per the evaluation of 'Livelihood Options with Market Mapping and Value Chain Analysis of Mango Cultivation' of BSWI's activities in Malda district, the following recommendations have been received by BSWI, and these are being addressed with significant priorities:

- 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 will be instituted at this juncture, and the capital will be monitored quarterly.

- To fulfil 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 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 resources.

- To enhance the operational efficiency of the Project, the current human resources may be appropriately deployed so that their potential is fully utilised and additional families/villages can be covered. The Cluster Coordinators may be encouraged to extend their technical expertise to the adjoining panchayats to popularise 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 remains mortgaged. Appropriae programmatic measures may be designed in consultation with SHGs.

- BSWI may encourage the beneficiaries and other citizens to organise '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 the 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 organisations.

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 distressed sale of mango trees and enable the beneficiary to realise the full value of this asset. Similarly, the recommendation for undertaking composting and reducing the use of chemical fertilisers may be acted upon.

Locals discussing

The SHG procedures may be standardised, and printed stationery may be provided to the groups. The training and capacity-building agenda may also be suitably modified in 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.

Learning education

- The federation of SHGs may be instituted only when the stakeholders are fully conversant with the idea and have acquired the necessary competence to run the organisation.

- The goat scheme may be redesigned to make optimal use of the available funds and to cover the maximum number of 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 may 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.

Women's Enterprise & Skill Development for Income Generation

"Gaon Chalo Abhiyan" is being implemented by TATA Global Beverages Ltd under its corporate social responsibility initiatives. The basic stakeholders of BSWI's projects are the needy and poorest rural families, especially the women from whom representation in various SHGs is growing day by day; BSWI thought it justified to collaborate with this program of TGBL for providing supplementary income sources to the SHG members, SHG Federation and the rural youth forces are grossly unemployed.

BSWI motivated poor rural women and unemployed youths to join this unique enterprise initiative to improve their livelihoods through the marketing of TATA Tea. BSWI focused on Women's SHGs, petty shopkeepers, small rural hot tea stalls, differently able persons, unemployed youths and other disadvantaged people. These project affiliates were then provided Tata Tea at the rates which give them attractive margins on the MRP. The supplementary income has been useful for 350 families and added value to the quality of their lives.

SHG member

Training of SHG leaders and the SHG Federation leaders was carried out with due importance as it was assumed by BSWI that the success of the Project would depend on them, who are the representatives of the communities. It has been a challenging task for BSWI to motivate the SHG members to trade business and to make them the main stakeholders who are from marginalised communities. Two training have been organised with 175 SHG members in a 2-day orientation program in Malda and Murshidabad. BSWI emphasised motivating the SHG members to be sales personnel to earn cash income by selling a globally renowned brand like Tata Tea. The SHG members initially could not dream of this idea, but later on, when they saw that they had benefitted, they inclined to this business actively and tried their level best.

Achievements

- Four district-level units have been opened in Malda, North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur and Murshidabad districts;
- 155 SHGs have been covered through different sensitisation programs, and in turn, they have sensitised the community residents regarding the GC of TGBL;
- Sale of TATA Tea has increased over a period of time from almost zero in the area;
- 476 villages in 16 Blocks have been covered by the program during this intervention period;
- Near about 60,000 households have been covered through this intervention in 476 villages;
- 350 members (the husbands of some of them have also joined hands) have been engaged in the business, and they have earned Rs.750 to Rs. 850 per month on average;
- Total sale of Tata Tea has increased in the area, and today, most of the villagers and the shops have become acquainted with the diverse products of Tata Tea;

Garment Making Units

As a gesture to meet the needs of the local villages, BSWI has started a Tailoring Training Centre and on its success, this project could be spread out in various blocks and districts to supply lower-cost hosiery goods by reducing the market chains and exploitation at various levels.

The garment-making unit has involved 25 women, and the space has been offered by the local Panchayat building. After six months of the skill training program, the women are earning an average of Rs. 750 a month.

SECTOR:
ORGANISATION BUILDING & EMPOWERMENT

BSWI mobilised 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.
- Organise 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.

Challenges

BSWI addressed the following challenges of its project areas

- 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;

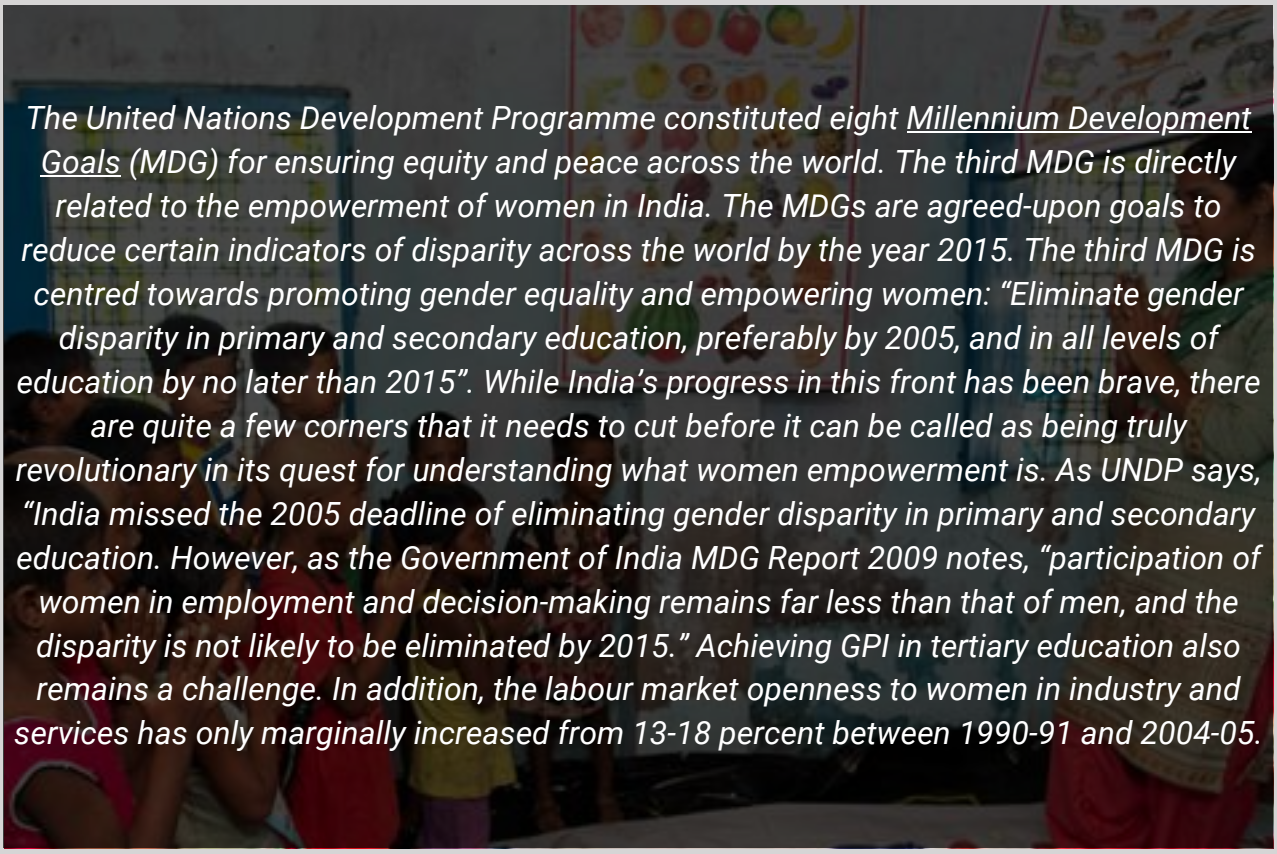
- Land alienation, exploitation by non-tribal groups, industrialisation and displacement, state violation of constitutional and protective legislation

- Inadequate and substandard educational facilities with a very high drop-out rate at the school level, particularly for girl children.

The various activities

1. Capacity Building

BSWI, with its long-standing experience in community organisation, provided capacity-building support to small groups and local organisations 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, organisation management, financial support, campaign support, marketing and technical expertise.



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.

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 government departments like SC & ST Welfare, Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, or with institutions/organisations 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.

Women learning at a workshop

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 the government and industries to share it, BSWI collects information, compiles it 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 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 Natural Resource Management, Business development by local producers, Long Term Perspective Planning, and feasibility studies for micro-finance projects.

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 is to empower women and young girls economically and educationally to enable them to participate in development activities, initiate the community to advocate for the support and education of girls, to increase the enrolment of girls in school, to change the lives of poor women, and their families through revolving fund provision and empower their households economically.

BSWI has carried out major activities like conducting community mobilisation workshop for different community members and reducing harmful traditional practices, educational support to poor 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 in this activity. During the year, BSWI has conducted the following activities for the members of the SHGs in the villages:

- BSWI has conducted 25 community mobilisation workshops 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 sensitisation workshops for community, religious and women representatives and concerned bodies on gender equality, human rights (women's rights) and child rights.

- Sensitisation 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 then 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.

Formation of SHGs:

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

1. Micro-Credit: Supporting poor women through the provision of a 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 practised 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 to the other poor women during the year who were on the waiting lists.

2. Capacity building(SHG & Federation members): The group members and 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.

Area developement

3. 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 analyse 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.

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

Inauguration of workers education project

BSWI has been sensitive to this issue through the final process of empowering the target group of 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 rural women were found to be the additives to the process of capacity building and empowerment of women.

Education centres for children

5. Group based Enterprises: BSWI promoted many self-help groups of women in its project villages. The members of the self-help groups need earnings 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 the 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 organisation.

handy-craft

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MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS

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 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 honourable" – 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