BARADRONE SOCIAL WELFARE INSTITUTION (BSWI)

ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024

Registered Address

Village & P.O. Baradrone, Block – Diamond Harbour,
District – South 24 Parganas,
West Bengal, India 743332

Kolkata city Address

BSWI, 2/14, Bidyasagar Uponibesh,
Baghajatin, Kolkata, India 700086.

South India City Address

SLV Sungrove, Junior College Road,
Kadugodi, Bengaluru, India 560067

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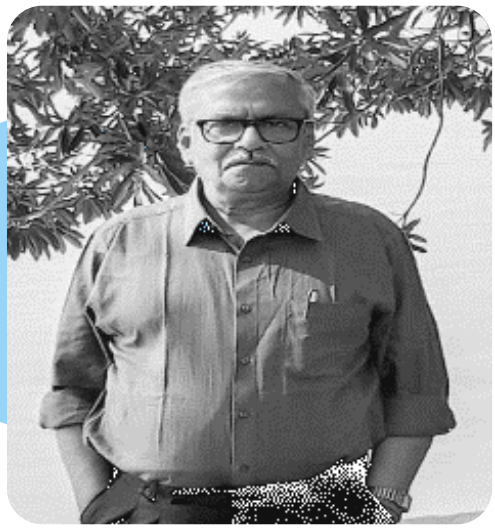
FROM THE DESK OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY & DIRECTOR



Dear Members, Donors, Well-Wishers, Staff and Volunteers,

Greetings from BSWI.

My heart fills with sorrow when at least one in every five households in West Bengal faced some food crisis as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the situation could have been worse had the state government not come up with free distribution of food grains through an augmented PDS mechanism, according to a report released by Nobel laureate Dr. Amartya Sen-led Pratichi (India) Trust. As I am also proud and have confidence that you all have looks on the contents of this humble presentation in the amid the life-taking pandemic. This is an effort to make all of you updated about the works carried out by our organization during the whole of the year. Being located in some of West Bengal's remotest pockets, we had first-hand knowledge of how bad the situation was in terms of health facilities, and awareness levels of the communities about safeguards against the rapidly spreading infection.

In the year of 2023-2024, we continued to focus our efforts on revitalizing the rural economy in partnership with the local administration, various government departments, our donor partners and community members. We strengthened our efforts to infuse cash in the hands of households through an integrated approach of promoting farming of high-value crops and kitchen gardens. We facilitated initiation of wage income works under Government of West Bengal schemes for the rural communities' access to various scheme entitlements, and generation of private asset creation activities on scale such as horticulture, farm forestry, lift irrigation, farm ponds creation, and small ruminants / livestock rearing. We also helped link young women and men to skilling and employment opportunities as well as enterprise opportunities in the allied and non-farm sectors. Our Commitment to a collaborative approach for development has resulted in burgeoning partnerships – existing and new - with government departments, private philanthropies, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

We sincerely thank everyone who has joined hands with the BSWI's activities and goals to make our dreams realities in spite of the critical situations. We convey our gratitude to all those funders, donors and all empathetic persons and associations, our staff members and volunteers who worked hard in serving the common people. We are proud of you – our well-wishers and brave soldiers for development.

With kind regards,

Sanjib Bhattacharya
General Secretary,
Director & Trustee.
Baradrone, July 10, 2024

Our Governing Body

Sachita Sarkar
President & Trustee

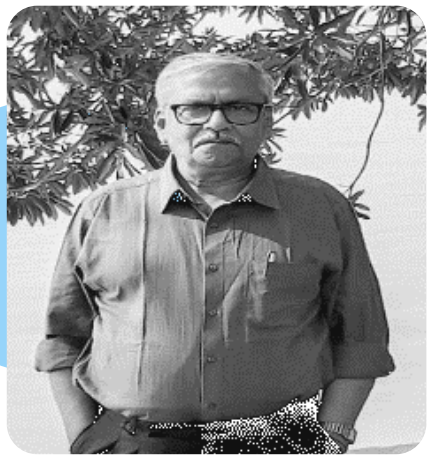
Mrs Sarkar is a veteran rural development activist with special focus on women's empowerment and organization building for the cause of societal development. She is a graduate from the Calcutta University and has participated in many development training and orientation programs in this state and outside. Mrs. Sarkar was indirectly associated with our organization for more than fifteen years and now as the President of our organization for last five years. She heads the Governing Body and actively assists all of its activities with her experiences and contributions for the social well-beings.

Anadi Naskar
Vice-President & Trustee

Mr. Naskar is associated with BSWI for more than three decades as a volunteer, staff and active development activist. He has grassroots experience and knowledge about livelihood development, games and sports and SHG motivation and activation. Mr. Naskar is a graduate from the Calcutta University. His contribution to this organization is unparallel and precious. He assists not only the President but also the whole of our Governing Body members with his long-standing education, experience and socialunderstanding.

Arati Sarkar
Asstt. Secretary &

Mrs. Arati Sarkar is a high school qualified woman. She is an entrepreneur for more than thirty years and a dynamic personality for managing and guiding the self-help groups (SHGs). She has been an example of enterprise development for being economically successful. She guides and teaches the several SHGs being run under the aegis of our organization. Mrs. Sarkar is a dynamic and smart women who is a pride to our society.



Sanjib Bhattacharya
Secretary-Director & Trustee

Mr. Bhattacharya has been one of the founder members of BSWI since the year of 1976 when the earlier "Library" was transformed to the present organization – BSWI. He has been carrying the legacy of his parents who were the main founders of the organization. Having been graduated from the Calcutta university in Pol. Sc. and Sociology (Hons), Shri Bhattacharya made him over to the development fields without going in for any traditional jobs. Later on, he received the MAP (Management Appreciation Program) from IRMA (Institute of Rural management Anand), Gujarat; MMFP (Management Micro Finance Program) from the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh and from ActionAid India; and then MRDP (Management Rural Development Program) from the Ramakrishna Mission Lokasiksha Parishad Narendrapur. He started his career from this organization from the year of 1981 as a Project Coordinator (and Founder Member). Mr. Bhattacharya is a highly devoted personality with long-standing experiences in all series of development aspects. He has worked with the Ministry of Rural Development as a Facilitator-cum-Evaluator for about a decade and trained many a NGOs in the districts of South 24 Parganas, East Medinipur, Darjeeling, Malda, Murshidabad, North Dinajpur and Silchar (Assam).

Haran Chandra Paik
Treasurer & Trustee

Mr. Paik is a veteran development worker and has served our organization since his student life. By profession he was the head teacher of a high school and academically he is a commerce graduate from the Calcutta University. He has vast knowledge in accounts procedures and is certified by the Ramkrishna Mission Lokasiksha Parishad Narendrapur. He has devoted himself in the cause of the society's welfare and he is vegetarian. He has contributed many significant things into the organization's working pattern.

Gourgopal Naskar
Member & Trustee

Mr. G. Naskar comes out from a respected family of the village. He is a graduate from Calcutta University and has served the important government departments for many years. Mr. Naskar is a games & sports and youth welfare expert as he was serving the government as the Subdivisional Youth Officer. He has contributed many significant things to the organization and has worked relentlessly for the welfare and character building of the local youths. He is on our Board for thirty years.

Swapan Bikash Naskar
Member & Trustee

Mr Swapan is representing the staffs and volunteers of the organization and encouraging them to follow the path of courage, peace and love to the human beings. He presents all information and reports to the Board of Members effectively and arranges all cultural programs, games & sports competition.

Our Advisory Body

Dr Kanchan Bhowmik
Advisor, BSWI

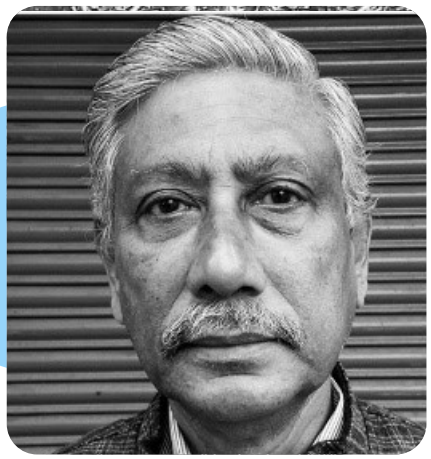
Dr. Bhowmick is a young man with progressive ideas for agriculture-based livelihood development. As a meritorious student, Dr. Bhowmick is an IIT fellow of Kharagpur IIT. He provides project planning and monitoring support to BSWI and helps the organization in decision making and exposure to new technologies in the agriculture sector.

Mr. Rangan Datta
Chief Advisor, BSWI

Mr Datta is a very respected and creative person who has contributed many great things to the government departments and to our organization. Mr. Datta has provided his expertise in various government departments, agencies and foundations led by the Government of India. He has great contributions to the growth of BSWI in many folds for the last two decades. He retired as a Secretary to the Government of India in the position of Senior IAS Officer on Ministry of Rural Development as Director General as well as the DG of Ministry of Home Affairs Government of India. After his retirement, Mr Datta has worked as an Advisor to the Planning Commission of India; Advisor of the Department of Science & Technology GoI; Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Foundation GoI and many other reputed government organizations.

Aditi Ray
Advisor, BSWI

Ms. Aditi is supporting BSWI in the field of making people learn; designing, preparing and delivering training course targeted for adult learners; Creating post curriculum evaluation and feedback forms; Conducting workshops for formulating intervention in the realm of social work development practice; Writing project proposals, log Frame, documentation reports; Conducting creative writing and storytelling workshops for adults and young adults; Imparting leadership training; Facilitating workshops for community organization and development practice; Developing adequate contents and modules for academic research; Preparing teaching learning materials; Conducting training sessions to impart knowledge based training on Rights and entitlements of women, Gender mainstreaming and empowerment, Child rights; Devising training program to facilitate skill development of organizational staff in terms of documentation, communication and interpersonal skills.



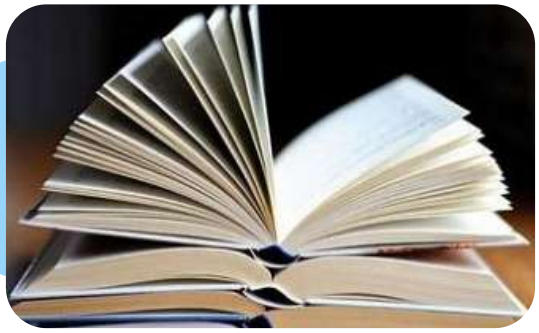
Dr. Rajat Das
Advisor, BSWI

Dr. Das is a qualified medical doctor with more than four decades involvement in social development sector. He was involved with a world-famous development charity and then established his organization ASHA that works in health related programs in many districts of India. He is associated with BSWI as an advisor in its health sector activities. With his support BSWI has made advancement in its functioning in the health sector.

Mr. Saikat Pal
Advisor, BSWI

Mr. Paul was associated with PRADAN, a pioneer national level rural development organization. He is also a Fellow of the IIT Kharagpur in Soil & Water Management. A young person with genuine zeal to induce sustainable rural development in the remote rural areas, Mr. Paul has been running an NGO and working closely with the government departments in varied development paradigms. Mr. Paul helps BSWI in devising project proposals and monitoring its activities of the sector. His contributions to BSWI have been outstanding and great and helped BSWI achieve many a great things in the field.

Operational Sectors of BSWI



EDUCATION & LIFE DETERMINATION

HEALTH & WELL BEING

Economic
Advancement &
Basic Necessities

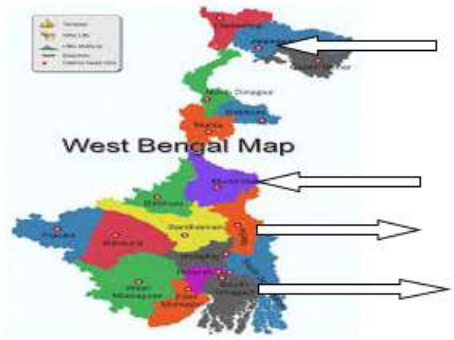
ORGANIZATION
BUILDING &
EMPOWERMENT

RELLIEF &
REHABILITATION

Objectives of BSWI

- 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 ad organizationally
- 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.

BSWI's Operational Areas



Coverage of Rural Population in various districts

Sl. No	State / Districts	Blocks & villages	Target populations reached
01	W.B. South 24 Parganas	Diamond Harbour I, Magrahat, Kulpi & Namkhana (40 villages)	242,000
02	W.B. Malda	W.B. Malda	37,000
03	W.B. North Dinajpur	W.B. North Dinajpur	34,000
04	W.B. Murshidabad	W.B. Murshidabad	26,600
05	Jharkhand – Rajmahal District	Jharkhand – Rajmahal District	11,345
06	Karnataka	Karnataka	3,485

Other Information

Salary & Benefits

Position	Amount per month	Highest paid staff (CEO)	Lowest paid staff (Night Guard)
Secretary & Director	Rs. 60,000/-	Rs. 30,000/-	Rs. 10,000/-

BSWI TEAM

- Project director: 1.
- Education sector: 1 sector coordinator; 2 joint coordinators; 22 moderators.
- Health sector: 1 sector coordinator; 1 doctor; 12 vhws; 2 supervisors.
- Livelihood sector: 1 sector coordinator; 2 joint coordinators; 6 field staff.
- Organization building: 1 sector coordinator; 2 organizers; 2 field staff.
- Accountants: 1 chief accountant; 3 assistant 3 accountants. Office assistants: 3 staffs.
- Bswi farmhouse & campus: 2 caretakers; 2 watchmen.

ABOUT BSWI

Introduction

Baradrone Social Welfare Institution (BSWI) is a pioneer organization in West Bengal that originated in the year of 1961 as a village level textbook library and free coaching centre.Gradually, BSWI stepped forward by partnering with the government and non-government charities in India and abroad and over the years it has played a major role in developing many governments and international agency funded projects and National Rural Development Programs. BSWI is continuing to work for change that is sustainable and self-perpetuating, bringing skills and systems that help women, families and communities gain confidence and take charge of their own lives. The opportunities and the association over the years have helped create learning/lessons for BSWI and gain organizational experience.BSWI catalyzes change in thousands of lives by implementing innovative efforts.

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

Our Dreams:

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

Our Values:

- **Respect – Believing in and appreciating the dignity and potential of all human beings;**
- **Integrity – Maintaining social, ethical and organizational norms and adhering to the code of conduct;**
- **Commitment – Fulfilling organizational goals with full commitment towards our duties and responsibilities; and**
- **Excellence – Setting high performance standards and being accountable for andresponsible towards our work.**

Adolescents Volunteers Team

Kishore Kishori Bahini (Youth Team)

Our Activities during the year 2023-2024

EDUCATION & LIFE DETERMINATION

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Children – that India ratified in 1992 – all children are born with fundamental rights:

- **Right to Survival – to life, health, nutrition, name, nationality**
- **Right to Development – to education, care, leisure, recreation, cultural activities**
- **Right to Protection – from exploitation, abuse, neglect**
- **Right to Participation– to expression, information, thought, religion; and**
- **Right to achieve these dreams**

BSWI's Approaches:

BSWI's role as an enabler has determined our strategic choices at every juncture – from the fundraising methods we employ, to the nature of our relationship with the village organizations and SHG Federations we partner.

Our interventions are designed to include:

- **Direct action addressing immediate, critical needs**
- **Community mobilization linking child rights and local pre-dominant issues**
- **Stringent planning, monitoring and evaluation both, financial and programmatic.**

Our programs take the form of:

- **Organization building**
- **Policy analysis**
- **Advocacy**
- **Community mobilization: We believe this is the most effective long-term solution to the multiple causes of poverty, deprivation, exploitation and abuse that constrain the rights of our children. In recent years, we have spearheaded a concerted, district-wide grassroots campaign in partnership with our SHGs, local associations and organizations that aim to establish:**
- **Authentic data on the situation of children – infant and child mortality, nutrition, enrolment, availability of functioning schools of at least adequate quality, child labour, gender and caste differences.**
- **Workable models to achieve universal access to primary and elementary education, healthcare, livelihoods and governance combining direct action, community mobilization and policy influence.**
- **Grassroots community mobilization aimed at ensuring universal access to equitable education through the Common School System and implementation of policies ranging from land rights through to the right to information.**

Resource Organizations: In the development sector there are numerous organizations that play a critical role of being a resource hub. These organizations have expertise in various areas of development, expertise that could enhance the quality of smaller, newer initiatives. These resource organizations work towards building the capacities of BSWI. These organizations build capacities through innovative teaching methods, materials and training programs for teachers, community works among others. They also play a vital role in policy influencing efforts at the micro level.

(a) Performance over the years: This year too, BSWI worked towards ensuring children live, learn, play, express themselves...bringing about lasting change in their lives. At BSWI, we are committed to our vision for a happy, healthy and creative childhood for every child. Over the course of the next 10 years, and to continue to make children and their rights a priority, we have reiterated goals that BSWI as an organization is committed to strive for. These include ensuring children in BSWI-supported areas have access to free and quality education, primary healthcare and are safe from violence, abuse and exploitation. To achieve far-reaching impact on a large scale, we have enabled local grassroots associations/organizations by providing them with training, program monitoring capability, increasing voluntary spirits, perspectives and capacities in addressing issues that affect children and their families.

Education & Health Improvement of Dropout and Non-school going Children:

In 2022, the BSWI SHIKHAKENDRA (BSWI Education Center) was established in Baradrone village, West Bengal as a response to the high rate of drop-outs in the rural community. BSWI traced this down to factors such as poor foundational skills, lack of access to quality teaching, safe infrastructure or even nutritious meals. An empty stomach never devoured much knowledge! We set up a safe space for providing quality academic engagement to academically weak students (grades Pre-primary to Class Five) from BPL families providing them remedial education support along with nutritious food and meals, health camps and regular counselling sessions. Our successes in Baradrone became a foundation for our programs in various remote rurl areas and the flagship school now serves as a laboratory for continued program development.

Pre-primary & Non-formal Education in Progress

We support 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 centers 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 front line 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.

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 quality 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 2024. 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 are attending high schools and even college education as a result of our constant work in the educational spheres.

Education & Health Project for Child Brick-field Workers:

We are already implementing the project on “Child Brick-field Workers' Education & Health Improvement” by receiving financial assistance from VASTENACTIE Netherlands.

We have created a good amount of awareness among the parents realizing the need of education in their kids' lives and at the same time we are creating awareness in health and personal hygiene among the parents and their kids who work in the brick-fields of Diamond Harbour. The target children do not have any access to education and regular health benefits.

Our work has advanced efficiently in generating awareness among the parents about the need of their children's quality education and they are encouraging the children to attend the project's schools regularly. The attendance level has been 100% during the course of this project in this current year (2023-2024). The children are also enjoying the classes and have advanced in their studies. The results of this interesting project are stated below:-

Result 1

ATTEMPT: We have taken the issue of the children through campaigns and dialogues with the local administration and education department about child rights and about supporting children's education and well-being by ensuring their rights.

ACHIEVEMENT: Our work has given a nudge on them like never before and they are supporting the project's children with books, primers and some other school materials. They have also joined hands with our organization in the campaign and sensitizing the target-parents for their children's all-round development.

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Result 2

ATTEMPT: We are deeply involved in creating local level target-groups' associations who would work as watch-dogs for ascertaining child rights and reporting to the sponsoring organization very soon.

ACHIEVEMENT: The target group members and the local brick-field workers are awakening and becoming alert about their children's legitimate claims and rights gradually.

Result 3

ATTEMPT: We have set up five Pre-Primary Education Centers (PPEC) for 125 infants of the working parents and five Non-Formal Education Centers (NFEC) for 125 children (6 years +) who are either working in the brick-kilns or are assisting their parents in their works according to their capacities.

Result 4

ATTEMPT: We are providing nutritious food for the enrolled children on a regular basis.

ACHIEVEMENT: The malnourished children are becoming healthy by reducing undernourishment and the improvement is tangible now.

Result 5

ATTEMPT: We are conducting regular health check-ups and curative care services for all of the infants and the children at free-of-costs.

ACHIEVEMENT: Morbidity is seen to be decreased among the children and they look healthier than before when we started this project here

Result 6

ATTEMPT: We are arranging exposure visits for the children to visit historical places and for nature tours. Effort

ACHIEVEMENT: The children's knowledge is improving and they are glad to getting opportunities to go out and enjoy joyful learning

Result 7

We are organizing Children's cultural programs and sports for the brick-kiln children.

ATTEMPT: The children have never got such scope of learning about the nature and about the country's historical places.

ACHIEVEMENT: Their enthusiasms have increased to a great extent and they are very happy in the project's education programs being aided by the esteemed organization VASTENACTIE.

Result 8

ATTEMPT: We are organizing various Children's cultural programs and sports for the brick-kiln children.

ACHIEVEMENT: The children have never got such scope of organizing cultural programs and games and sports. They are joyfully participating such extra-curricular activities and their interest to education and extra-curricular have increased to a great extent. It is good to see that the children are very happy in the project's education programs being aided by VASTENACTIE.

Providing Access to Education

We set up technology-equipped Learning Centres (LC) that took the classrooms to the children. We set up a total of 20 Centres in villages across Gazole, Bamungola, Habibpur (Malda district); Taljhari and Rajmahal Blocks in Jharkhand; Diamond Harbour and Namkhana Blocks in South 24 Parganas districts. Each LC catered to students of Class 10 from villages within three to five kilometers. Community buildings or private houses that could accommodate 15 students at a time were chosen as learning centres. The team ensured that the space was sufficient for children to be seated while maintaining the required physical distancing per Covid safety norms.

Local volunteers, who were either Class 12 graduates or pursuing college education or with teaching experience, became para teachers. Thirty-three such men and women provided learning support in the Centres. Teachers from four BSWI schools supported them in weekly and monthly sessions, planning and clearing student doubts in addition to ensuring teaching quality. The para teachers underwent training on the subjects they were responsible for teaching.

Students attended classes for three hours every day for seven days a week. While they learnt different subjects from Monday to Saturday, on Sundays, the teachers cleared their doubts from the week that had just passed. Students appeared for tests twice a month to assess their own progress and identify areas of improvement. With the Government of West Bengal resuming schools for Class 10 in early January, the Centers stopped functioning. In a few cases, the village community has taken the lead to continue the learning centers to cater to the needs of children in Classes 8 and 9.

HEALTH & WELL BEING

Community Health & our work

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.

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.

Doctor checking a child

Mouth wash is being ensured

Health & Sanitation Awareness Program

Nutrition & our work

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).

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.

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 & hygiene education of women and adolescents 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: 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.

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 motherhood 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.

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.;
- Conducted series of awareness generation camps for adolescents at village levels and schools on menstrual management and hygiene;
- Distributed low cost sanitary napkins for the rural women and adolescent girls;
- Conducted health check ups and Baby Shows in various villages and in the main centre;
- Through our health clinic we have provided medical aid at subsidized prices to 198 poor patients who were unable to afford to the full cost of medicines;
- We have provided free eye check-ups and distributed spectacles to more than 600 needy and poor villagers in Diamond Harbour, Kulpi and Magrahat blocks.

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.

In order to tackle the immense poverty in remote villages of North Bengal (Malda), we have provided seed money for household small poultry rearing units to 210 Self-Help Group members this year. By this they are earning palpable incomes on recurring basis that have been highly beneficial for maintaining their families' crisis.

Supporting and encouraging the public systems so that the slew of relief measures announced by the government reaches the neediest and the deserving. This entailed mapping all families that did not have ration cards, opening Jan Dhan accounts, issuing MGNREGS job cards and other such documentation, to avail of state benefits.

Using digital technology:

In anticipation of reduced face-to-face contact with the villagers (for training, planning, on-field support), colleagues across the field areas explored innovative ways of reaching out to communities using digital technology. A number of training modules were developed using digital platforms. Audio-visual tools were extensively used to impart knowledge and skills. Local cadres were acquainted with digital platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet. We modified our content to provide digital training, using audio-visual aids, PPTs, information-education-communication (IEC) material that could be circulated through WhatsApp. Over 2,000 community cadres were trained in this, to support households in planning, conducting agronomic training and offering crop advisory. In the Santhal Pargana Development Cluster (SPDC) in Jharkhand, the KOBO-based online app was adopted for individual, household-level, comprehensive livelihoods planning.

Nutrition Gardens

Nutrition Gardens have been done in backyards of the rural communities

Creating a nutrition garden in the backyard aimed at promoting health and nutrition through utilizing small homestead land parcels that families own. It was widely scaled out with the support of Nutrition Mentors and Change Vectors. Garden layouts and crop selection were done, based on the availability of land in the backyard, food practices and local crop varieties. We influenced policy makers in West Bengal and Jharkhand and got nutrition gardens included in the 'Shelf of Activities' under MGNREGS through administrative orders, thus ensuring cash income and availability of nutritious food for participating households across many project blocks and beyond.

Comprehensive Livelihoods

We piloted a comprehensive livelihoods approach in 65 villages, with the focus on the centrality of women, inclusion, nutrition, agro-climatic sustainable practices and sustainable incomes. This involved the perspective and capacity building of women collectives and facilitating the collectives to develop a village-level comprehensive livelihoods plan.

West Bengal Department of Micro Small & Medium Enterprises and Textiles, has patronized the wonderful craft heritage of West Bengal, not only to sustain it but to develop it further, keeping pace with new demand pattern, new designs. Having joined hands with our organization, the Government has continuously encouraged and supported enhancement of skills for quality creations in the Handicraft sector which has reaped benefits for the craftsmen and we together have created a growing number of craft-admirers both in the country and abroad even in the midst of this pandemic keeping in view the norms.

Self Help Group members have been self-employed through skill development

The Handicraft products of the state are available at different emporiums and showrooms (of Biswabangla, Manjusha, Bangasree etc.) spread over at various locations of West Bengal and outside. In addition to the District-level Handicraft Fair, the State Handicraft Expo is held in Kolkata where our organization collaborated. In every winter where Buyer-Seller Meet is regularly organised for direct market exposure of the handicraft artisans. Participations are also made at various fairs and craft bazaars at state and national level and in various Indian festivals.

Handicrafts works giving the women palpable incomes

Women collectives developed an integrated natural resource management (INRM) plan for approval in Gram Sabhas, in order to leverage funds from different schemes. The villages selected were ultra-poor and covered the most deprived families. We also planned the promotion of economic collectives such as Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) so as to unleash growth in the agriculture sector that would be synergized by building robust value chains of vegetables, cereals, horticulture crops and livestock. This involved not only bringing changes in agricultural practices but also the institutional development aspects.

Traditional Goddess Images bringing good income for the trained women

NEW PARTNERSHIP IN 2023-2024

Sustainable Livelihoods Carbon Project: Karnataka, Jharkhand and West Bengal:

The 'Sustainable Livelihoods Carbon Project', is meant to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in selected project areas of Kolar (Karnataka district), Jharkhand and Northern West Bengal by helping small-holders create durable natural resource assets. These land and water assets will not only strengthen their livelihoods but also address climate change issues by coupling carbon sequestration with strong social, environmental and economic value added for the communities involved in the project.

Seepage Ponds, 5% Models and Drought & Water Management Ponds have been created for scientific agriculture

Empowering Women through Direct Seeded Rice Cultivation (DSR):

This project aimed at improving the food security of marginal farmers through the use of modern tools, to develop sustainable rice production clusters with the enabling community in Taljhari and Rajmahal blocks of Jharkhand by creating the required ecosystem to facilitate Direct Seeded Rice (DSR) cultivation. Rice-based farming can greatly benefit small-scale farmers, especially women, and help end hunger in these areas. The productivity of the blocks is far below 50% of the national average and needs a jump start. The project worked with about 6,000 marginalized farmers that converge on 40 villages. The goal was to ensure that, by the end of the project, 60% of them adopt DSR practices. Six thousand farmers have adopted DSR practices and more than 15,000 farmers have become aware about DSR so far.

SRI (System of Rice Intensification) and SCI (System of Crop Intensification) have been grand success in North Bengal & Jharkhand through increased staple food (rice)

Resurgence of Rural Economy-based Livelihoods

The project has facilitated 1700 women farmers associated with 65 SHGs to overcome the after-effect resulting from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic through Fish Cultivation that provided short term fish for selling. It is a three-year project that covers eight blocks of four extremely backward districts in the states of Karnataka, Jharkhand and West Bengal.

BSWI is helping rural women members of self-help groups (SHGs) earn good income through inland fisheries

Agriculture & Small Enterprises are going together for poverty alleviation

Skill Building in Rural Women can go a long way to poverty alleviation

Assured Income Enhancement through Model Goat Farming

This three-year project aspired to enhance the capabilities of 120 poor-rearers in the districts of Malda and Taljhari block in Jharkhand to ensure an additional annual income of Rs 30,000 per rearer (from the current average income of Rs 5,000). Rearers have been collectivized into 10 Producers Groups (PGs) in 25 villages, and these PGs have been federated into three block-level Producers' Collectives (BPCs), to support and sustain their rearing business.

Women SHG members earning good income through Black Bengal Goat keeping

North Bengal women prospering economically through Scientific Mango Cultivation

Strengthening livelihoods and doubling farmers' income:

The project supported families in Gajole block (Gazole Block of Malda district), Kaliaganj Block of North Dinajpur district and Taljhari Block of Jharkhand, to enhance their food security and income by strengthening their agriculture production system with streamlined market linkages, and by augmenting livestock rearing practices, with the required vaccinations and other required services. Further, the idea is to facilitate community institutions such as

Federations and VOs for improving the nutritional status of women and children through better access to public services such as PDS, ICDS and other relevant health services, and demonstrating how to cultivate nutri-gardens, thereby supporting beneficiaries (including pregnant women, lactating mothers and children below three years along with vulnerable households). Additionally, the focus is to create a suitable environment by creating awareness of safety measures and supporting migrants and other households impacted by the lockdown.

SHG Collectives–PRI Collaboration toward Better Social Protection: The goal of this short-term project is to build the concept of SHGs as actors in facilitating access to social protection programs by rural communities. The proposed intervention is focused on creating a ground-up action to involve community collectives in feedback mechanisms to the state, to improve the functioning of key social protection programs.

Enabling income earning opportunities

With rural markets with a los business status, the government led MGNREGS offered a much-needed livelihood safety net for the poor. We have joined with the government department to spread the facilities of getting daily works for the rural farmers. BSWI, along with the Village Development Committees, worked closely with the local governments to identify and generate work under the scheme. The types of work initiated were geared to improve water security, help in soil conservation, improve land productivity; and create durable assets such as household toilets and community playgrounds. Our team helped people get job cards and mobilized women and men including the returning migrants to take up the work to cope with the job and income insecurities.

Mitigating food insecurity

While most families received their Public Distribution Service (PDS) food grains, food insecurity continued to plague the most vulnerable as the continued crisis of no work left them with little income to buy essentials or save for the monsoon. Moreover, the quantity of food received through the PDS was insufficient, and many did not have ration cards. We launched the Food Support Program, a collective effort with the Village Development Committees (VDCs). The VDCs identified the vulnerable households and finalized the list of those in need of extra support. Women-headed households, families without PDS entitlement, with only senior citizens, and households having people with disabilities or prolonged illnesses were prioritized.

The VDCs led the process of vendor selection, procurement, packaging and distribution. Local procurement, instead of from the city, not only ensured reduced costs with transparency but also gave business to local suppliers. Food kits were customized as per the local needs and food preferences. In some districts, for instance, in Kalahandi, soybean chunks, dried red chilies, and turmeric powder were preferred while replaced milk powder was preferred in some others. Families collected food kits from the distribution centers set up in the village. Each of them committed to contributing 10 days of their labour for any upcoming village development work.

SANITATION & HEALTH

Capacity-building of village communities and institutions ensured water quality monitoring, waste management, and behaviour change towards better health

Women-led drinking water management – A Case Study

Twenty-two women from Hatuganj village partnered with BSWI to get piped water supply, toilets, and bathing rooms and lead on water quality management in the community.

Kanpur, a village in Diamond Harbour block in South 24 Parganas District, suffered from a lack of water and power supply. Twenty-two women from the village came together and partnered with BSWI to get piped water supply, toilets, and bathing rooms. These women also became leaders of water quality management in the community.

Kumkum Mondal, President of Kanpur Village Development Committee (VDC), looks back on the struggle for water by the women of her village. “We held awareness meetings in the village for putting a piped water and sanitation system in place. None of the men supported us at that time.” When women of all 22 households agreed to own a sanitation system and piped water at any cost, BSWI agreed to set up the system in the village.

Little by little, these women saved money. They collected palm leaves from the localities and made hats, seats and other handicrafts to sell in the village market, worked as daily wagers during road construction in Hatuganj village at the time or as labourers at construction sites earning up to ₹90 per day. The women could save enough within one year to make the initial contribution of ₹100000 for the corpus fund kept in a bank on a fixed deposit. The Village Development Committee will use the interest to provide financial assistance to new families in the village to build toilets and bathing rooms.

SHG members takes decision for village level development

Their problems did not end there. In 2020, the village had a severe incidence of diarrhoea, scabies, and flu. Women and children faced the brunt and fell ill regularly. In December 2020, the BSWI team tested water from household tap connections and found it contaminated. Later, the team found cracked pipes in two places, and the valves had sprung up leaks. Water was tested from these two points and found contaminated with bacteria causing diarrhoea and scabies.

In January 2021, Anjani Jani became a trained Water Quality Management cadre in the BSWI program to ensure access to safe water free from bacteria and other particulate matter. She talks about the collective strength of women in making safe water a reality for every home in the village, "Unlike other villages, our village is in darkness, but we have ensured piped water supply to every household. The water supplied is safe for drinking now. I got training and have learned the water testing protocols. We do not have any cases of diarrhoea or itching anymore." Anjali is one of the 22 community-level water quality cadres in the South 24 Parganas district of Odisha.

Women's collective decision and involvement has made village pipe water supply a reality

Adolescent girls lead health conversations and actions in villages – A Case Study

An adolescent girls group in Nudia village meets weekly, discusses sanitation and hygiene issues, and promotes appropriate WASH and nutrition behaviour. "We don't talk about issues we face during menstrual days; we find it hard to dispose of used sanitary napkins. We use sanitary pads as we know this, but not sure if all the girls of our region are using and safely disposing of them", says Sabina Khatun of the village in Diamond Harbour block, South 24 Parganas district. She is one among the 16 girls in the adolescent peer group.

Kalyani adds, "We learnt from the sessions we attended that we should eat healthy food during this adolescent period as this happens to be the age where significant changes happen in our bodies. We need adequate iron supplements to replenish the blood loss due to monthly menstrual cycles".

The adolescent group meets weekly, discusses sanitation and hygiene issues, and promotes appropriate WASH and nutrition behaviour. The group support children in the village with creative learning. Women in the community celebrate Nutrition Week at the Anganwadi Centres. Nurjahan Bibi, the Anganwadi worker in Sultanpur, shares, "We observe the Nutrition Education events, especially the Nutrition Week. It is an appropriate space to discuss the 1000-day nutrition concept. BSWI shares the importance of eating a balanced diet, water quality and the relevance of WASH behaviour in nutrition through the women and adolescent groups".

"WASH interventions such as availability of safe water for drinking, use and maintenance of toilets and the water supply systems, solid waste and grey water management are some critical components of the program. These simple yet important behaviors and practices help keep the infectious diseases especially diarrhoea at bay", adds Halima, SHG member from Sultanbagh village.

Networking and sectoral contributions bolstered the impact of our efforts

The National Jal Jeevan Mission of the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India, recognized BSWI'S experience in the community-owned and managed rural water and sanitation sector as a best practice. It selected BSWI as a Key Resource Centre to provide capacity-building support to community-level stakeholders in Jal Jeevan Mission. We are part of several advisory and technical platforms at the national and State levels.

The Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Department of the Government of West Bengal appointed BSWI as an Implementation Support Agency to support the preparation of Village Action Plans and the formation of Village Water and Sanitation Committees.

BSWI joined the Rapid Community Response to COVID (RCRC) coalition. We participated in extensive research on the effects of COVID-19 among rural communities to advocate for changes in national-level policies.

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