

ANNUAL REPORT OF INSTITUTE FOR NATURE CARE AND DEVELOPMENT 2016-2017



1. INTRODUCTION-INCD BASIC INFORMATION

Institute for Nature Care and Development (INCD) started its journey with an aim to empower the under privileged sections of the society, the rural areas of India. In research partnership with **Social Informatics Research Group (SIRG), Indian Institute of Management Calcutta (IIMC)**, INCD attempts to inculcate in rural women, children and youth essential skills and knowledge, so that they are empowered to exploit their skill set in pursuit of socio-economic prospects.

INCD has been conducting **BSS certified** (BSS is the *National Development Agency* established in 1952 and promoted by **Planning Commission, Govt. of India**) academic trainings for rural children and vocational trainings for rural adults across locales in rural West Bengal.

Vision

INCD's vision is to create a more inclusive society through holistic development of community at large with a focus towards empowering them with knowledge, information and opportunities so that they can live a dignified life and become contributing members of society.

Mission

INCD's mission is to generate employment opportunities for weaker sections of the society by

- Providing them recognized certification based career-oriented vocational training primarily in health and social care sectors
- Inculcating confidence in the trained workforce through soft skill, entrepreneurship, financial and digital literacy training
- Providing them the opportunities to upgrade their acquired skills and improving the quality, productivity, efficiency of the trained workforce

2. REPORT ON ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

With the purpose of disseminating quality learning and skill development along with market linkage and opportunity connect, we have worked on the following Project activities. We work in collaboration with the Research Excellence Group, Social Informatics Research Group in Indian Institute of Management Calcutta.

i) COMPAS: COMMUNITY PROFILING & ASSESSMENT

Focusing on assessing the learning achievement levels of students (young and adults) from lower socio-economic background, we have conducted student profiling in a village in Kalicharanpur, South 24 Parganas, in a residential school in Burdwan and in Bagaria, Diamond Harbour. We have conducted several ASER studies and competency studies to know the current level of learning among students. In doing so, our organisation identifies those students who are weak in studies. And then, we try to provide them better quality learning using technologies with help from the Research Excellence Group.

We will now briefly mention our activities in community profiling and assessment.

A) STUDENT PROFILING IN A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL IN PALLA ROAD, BURDWAN

While working in remote rural areas in Burdwan, West Bengal we have come across a residential school for the underprivileged students. These students hail from below poverty line, most of them being first generation learners. We conducted basic profiling along with academic wellbeing studies of 200 students.

It was observed that the students belong from an extremely low-socio-economic background. The students mostly lived in hostels and several of them were orphans. 81.25% of the observed students were residing in the school premises, whereas only 18.75% were residing in nearby. All of them are from agricultural background. Following the socio-economic understanding of the students, a pre-study was conducted on the students of class II. We have conducted academic and wellbeing studies on 50 students from Grade 1 to 5

The academic evaluation study was conducted on 50 students from Grade 1 to 5 through standard testing tools used for academic profiling (ASER). The students were given simple tests on basic concepts of English literacy and Numeracy which matched with their class curriculum. A sample of the result is mentioned below:

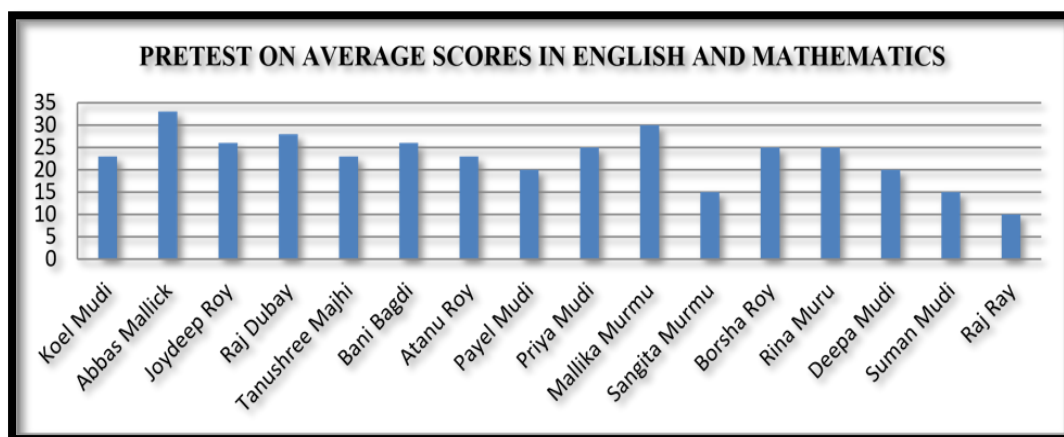


Fig. ASER score of class II students.

The academic evaluation study was followed by a wellbeing study which comprised of the parameters such as aspiration level, influence of community, help from family, attitudes of teachers in school, peer-to peer relationship in classrooms and general happiness of the students. Students failed to communicate often owing to their shyness. This shows that the students despite staying on campus most of the time do not feel fully invited by the teachers. Most of the female students wanted to be like their mothers who are home-makers.



Glimpse of ASER Test conducted by field worker

B) STUDENT PROFILING IN A LOW-COST PRIVATE SCHOOL IN KALICHARANPUR, SOUTH 24 PARGANAS

In 2016 June, we conducted a student profiling survey in Kalicharanpur, South 24 Parganas. Students belong to backward class and caste. Their parents were mostly daily wage labourers, maids, involved in menial labour work, working as laborer in middle eastern countries, small shop owners etc. The economic scenario in the region is very dynamic where one hand there are families who are well equipped with television, motorbikes, fridge, music system etc. On the other hand there are also those families where individuals cannot even afford one day's meal for themselves. Despite this inequality in economic conditions, this region is united on account of education. All students in this area barring economic strength, are extremely poor in studies. At the time of interview, the students said that none of them received any support from their families. Near to this school in Kalicharanpur, there was another school in the region which was government sponsored. This school too was not well equipped to provide proper education. Being a private school, it does not have adequate number of trained B.Ed. qualified teachers. Teacher absenteeism is a vital issue in the school. When interviewed, students and parents had expressed their desire to get additional academic assistances despite their existing tuitions after school. On an average, the students scored 15 out of 50. They didn't have the knowledge of simple words. They were aware of the alphabets and could say some basic words starting with each alphabet. But they didn't know the spelling. In the reading test in ASER, all of the students failed to even read a single sentence.

C) PROFILING OF ADULT LEARNERS IN BAGARIA. DIAMOND HARBOUR IN SOUTH 24 PARGANAS

We have conducted academic profiling among fifty in-service school teachers in the rural area of Bagaria, South 24 Parganas. All these women were in-service school teachers in the local schools. All of them were English, Bengali and Social Studies teachers. Unfortunately, they were unable to speak proper English. We took several tests assessing their prior knowledge of English. We aimed at evaluating their spoken and communicative skills in English.

ii) **STUDY: SUPPLEMENTARY TEACHING USING DIGITAL & PHYSICAL INTERVENTION**

This year we have focused on improving the quality of learning among school students and adult learners. We have initiated this project in collaboration with Social Informatics Research Group, IIM Calcutta. SIRG has architected an online teaching learning platform which uses social technologies in connecting rural students with experienced teachers. Our role was to manage, coordinate the activities in the rural areas. We conducted workshops, offline trainings in the rural areas. Our objective was to motivate students, parents and teachers in the rural localities. We have initiated the following interventions:

A) ACADEMIC INTERVENTION AT VIDYA TIRTHA SHISHU NIKETAN AT PAILAN, SOUTH 24 PARGANAS

We organised students studying in the primary section and taught them both academic and non-academic subjects. We provided the offline teaching assistance to the students, whereas SIRG connected these students with experienced teachers from the city remotely through an online learning platform. The students studied academic English and an informal subject named “Grand parenting” from two retired teachers remotely. Children were taught through songs and videos and were taught stories from Bengali fables. They not only expressed huge interest but interacted very well with the teacher. The retired teachers were professional Montessori teachers having 30 years of experience each. Students were taught three-digit additions, and subtractions in mathematics, while in English they learned about nouns and pronouns. It was revealed that the students who barely knew anything are now scoring better than class average. The study revealed that the student performance had increased considerably in their academic per student. Students enjoyed the lessons. It was observed that their academic growth in these 90 days were very high as the content, delivery and teacher were all very high and well trained. The before after scores depict stark changes in the children’s wellbeing level when exposed to ICT based remote teaching by elderly teachers. Children were taught through songs and videos and were taught stories from Bengali fables. Our field representatives were stationed there at the time of the intervention and conducted regular assessments, helped in home-works etc. We regularly conducted parent workshops int the school.



B) INTERVENTION IN PALLA ROAD, BURDWAN

Keeping in mind the deplorable condition of learning among students, we initiated our online-offline learning intervention in the school in Palla Road, Burdwan. Our field level coordinators mobilised community level students, in-service teachers and parents. After several motivational workshops, we started to provide students from class I and II supplementary tuitions. SIRG worked towards connecting students with experienced retired teachers online. We on the other hand, monitored the classes on a regular basis. One of our coordinators became the assistant teacher in the rural classroom. Three online teachers taught students of class I and II English, Mathematics, Grandparenting and Music.

In collaboration with SIRG, we upgraded the existing school curriculum and also trained the in-service school teachers. According to our assessment the children did have less than average academic knowledge, but there were other skills that they lacked. The children were extremely shy and timid. To focus on the holistic development of each child, Grandparenting sessions were introduced online by retired teachers who are keepers of informal knowledge in forms of experiences.

In order to increase interest among students, we conducted several workshops, programmes such as Rabindra Jayanti where we trained students in dance, music, theatre etc.

C) ONLINE LEARNING INITIATIVE AT CHANDANPIRI RAMKRISHNA ASHRAM, NAMKHANA, SOUTH 24 PARGANAS

Located in the further south of Bengal, Chandanpiri is quite cut off from the mainland. INCD made an instrumental achievement by identifying Chandanpiri Ashram in Namkhana. Though a school accommodating more than 3000 students, the learning achievement standards of students are below the

standard. After conducting the base line survey, we informed Team SIRG and then we started our intervention of disseminating quality learning to the students.

The intervention aimed at providing the students with quality teachers and quality teaching learning material through an online live portal. Competency based curriculum was provided to the teacher along with relevant videos which were shared with the students. Trial live sessions started from February 2016 and were in full swing from April 2016 and continued for 6 months till October 2016. Initially the classes occurred on an irregular basis owing to problems in audio, video and internet connectivity which was resolved gradually. The intervention consisted of lessons in Mathematics and English for children remotely via video conference with help from the remote teachers. Over a period of 6 months a total of 144 online sessions were conducted with them.

In English the students of class VII were taught detailed Grammar along with their text following West Bengal Board Syllabus. With rigorous efforts from both sides, students could successfully read short sentences in English towards the end of six months of intervention.



For Mathematics there were two remote expert teachers teaching for a period of three months each. Moreover, their capacity of grasping and understanding problems on numeracy was also very slow. However, *the students were obedient and hardworking* in nature. The vivid use of graphical representations and animations to explain numerical problems made it very easy for the students to understand the concepts.

D) BLENDED LEARNING INITIATIVE IN KALICHARANPUR, SOUTH 24 PARGANAS

At present 50 students from the primary school attends online academic and Spoken English sessions through the teaching learning platform. The students pay a nominal fee to the entrepreneur for the online classes. This particular report is based on the first six months of intervention with the class I students at Kalicharanpur. 10 class I students have taken more than 50 online English sessions till date. The students have been taught English Grammar, Literature and conversations in English. Competency based curriculum was provided to the teacher along with relevant videos which were shared with the students. One expert teacher taught the children for a period of 3 months, with three classes per week, taught with audio-visual teaching aids.

iii) SCOPE : SKILL, COMPETENCY, OPPORTUNITY DRIVEN EMPLOYABILITY

In this project we have catered to 90 students who took admission in the BSS-certified (BSS is the *National Development Agency* established in 1952 and promoted by Planning Commission, Govt. of India) courses in physiotherapy & activity therapy. Out of these 90 students, 36 students, enrolled in Certificate course in Physiotherapy & Activity Therapy (CPT) and 46 students, enrolled in Diploma in Physiotherapy & Activity Therapy (DPT) finally appeared for the final examination and received the certificates. First batch of Diploma in Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology started with 33 students and the students of first batch successfully completed their course.



Workshops and conferences attended during 2016-17

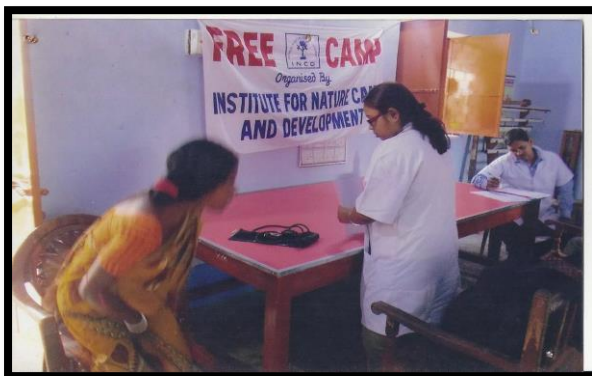
- A conference was organized by West Bengal Association of Sports Medicine during 25.02.2017-26.02.2017 at Rabindra Bhavan Midnapur. 51 students from INCD participated in that conference and attended a hands-on session to learn various kinds of

procedures applicable to treat the patients having knee replacement, ankle injury and breathing trouble.



Other welfare programs held during 2016-17

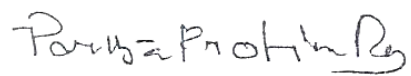
- Free Physiotherapy camp organized for the boarders of NABANIR old age home in August 2016
- Free Health camp (with free BMD test) organized at Chetla in September 2016
- Free Health camp and Physiotherapy camp organized at 41 Pally Club, Haridebpur in November 2016
- Free Physiotherapy Camp held at Bramha Samaj, Dhakuria in March 2017



Conclusion

We in INCD not only aim towards providing teaching and training services to the rural masses, we also work towards mobilising, sensitising and motivating the rural youth. We thus focus on pushing rural youth to harness their innate skills and grab newer opportunities. In the coming years we aim to work in education and skill training along with providing market linkage to rural women.

Thanking You



(PARTHA PROTIM ROY)
SECRETARY