

ANNUAL REPORT OF INSTITUTE FOR NATURE CARE AND DEVELOPMENT 2017-2018



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. This year we have also partnered with **NexConnect Ventures Pvt Ltd which is an Entrepreneurial product of SIRG.**

We as a non profitable organisation work towards mobilising, monitoring the rural communities along with SIRG as our Research Implementation Partner and NexConnect as the Online Platform Implementation and Digital Technology implementation partner.

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. This year, we also collaborated with NexConnect Ventures Pvt Ltd, an Entrepreneurial Product of SIRG Excellence Group. NexConnect is the

owner of the online learning platform that connects rural students with urban teachers and trainers. NexConnect is responsible towards creating franchisees in rural areas, making rural adults independent entrepreneurs.

Keeping this tripartite structure in view, we have conducted the following project activities at the rural level.

i) COMPAS: COMMUNITY PROFILING & ASSESSMENT

This year we have focused on conducting base line surveys of school children and adult learners. We have primarily focused in the district of Birbhum. We have explored more than fifteen villages in the district of Brbhum, assessing level of learning among the students. Our field investigators have interviewed students, school teachers, parents in these fifteen villages. They have also studied the tuition system in the area to understand how much the students are dependent on supplementary tuitions.

A) PROFILING OF SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MOHANPUR, AHAMPUR, KOPAI, GOPDIHI, BIRBHUM

Within the radius of 50 Kms from Bolpur, Birbhum, we have conducted extensive surveys of school students and adult learners. Our field investigators conducted a door to door survey. The questionnaire comprised of questions such as family income, occupation, expenses towards private tuitions and finally academic level of students. It was found out that most students despite poor economic background go to private tuitions. Unfortunately, their ASER scores are low. Most of the students are extremely poor in spoken English and Mathematics. The most alarming thing is that in places such as Ahamadpur and Gopdihi, students' and parents' motivation towards education is near to absent.



B) PROFILING OF ADULT LEARNERS IN JOYNAGAR, SOUTH 24 PARGANAS

We have conducted academic evaluation study on twenty adult students in Joynagar. These students are of age 15 to 20 years. Most of them have either dropped out of school or are in class XI or XII. These students have scored high marks in English ASER test where their written abilities and grammar were evaluated. Unfortunately, their spoken variety of English was poor. Along with spoken English, these students didn't know how to operate a computer.

C) LIFE AND LIVELIHOOD PROFILING OF SELF HELP GROUP WOMEN IN KANDI, MURSHIDABAD

We are working with an SHG Federation named Kandi Mahila Federation in Kandi, Murshidabad in collaboration with SIRG and NexConnect. 50 smart-mobile phones with Internet facility were distributed to 50 women in the Self-help group Federation in collaboration with Panasonic India and Airtel. We along with our Partner Organisations, distributed the phones in two phases primarily to the leaders of the SHGs. The smart-phones consisted of an Application named NCore where the users had to fill in answers for questions related to any problem they are facing, about their created products etc. After one month of regular internet facilitation through mobile the next group of 25 women in different SHGs were given mobile phones with internet along with training to use the same applications. Most of the women previously were unaware of what the other SHG group women produced and sold. This intervention created among SHGs willingness to replicate others' products. Survey picture:



ii) STUDY : Supplementary Teaching Using Digital & phYsical intervention

A) COMMUNICATIVE ENGLISH SESSIONS FOR ADULT LEARNERS IN DIAMOND HARBOUR

We have conducted the offline sessions to five in-service school teachers of Bagaria, Diamond Harbour. We assisted the online expert teacher by monitoring the sessions. Throughout the sessions students were encouraged to communicate in English. Each participant's doubts and questions were answered. Assignments were given with each session and study materials were provided with each session. Offline assistance through phone call, email and WhatsApp group discussion were provided by INCD Team. Technology has played crucial role in the process of learning to the women. Along with the online sessions, regular WhatsApp communication in the "Communicative English" group helps the women practice communicative English more often. The teacher keeps on answering their queries and sends teaching learning materials over WhatsApp.

As assistant to the online teacher, our field level representative took more than ten exams within a span of twelve months. The classes are still going on. There has been a gradual increase in their scores. Jui and Krishna has scored low in the second examination on articles and omission of articles. Pooja has scored the least marks in evaluation one on greetings and salutations. All five has shown remarkable progress in the final exam on pronouns.



Students have enjoyed all the sessions thoroughly. They now feel more confident in framing a sentence and to speak in English.

They have gained a basic vocabulary level though haven't reached a point where they can converse fluently in English. Overall, they are enthusiastic with the learning's and are willing to continue the course. They feel that online mode of teaching is much better than offline mode as they can attend classes remotely which saves their travel time. They are enthusiastic for the reason that they are being taught using 'student-oriented syllabus pattern' in very gentle manner. Some students have shared the TLMs with their

acquaintances and they in turn are now willing to register under our course.

3. SCOPE : Skill, Competency, Opportunity driven Employability

In this project we focused on upskilling and exposing the rural mass to the wider opportunities available. We have worked with NexConnect and SIRG in three villages such as Kandi in Murshidabad, Kopai in Birbhum and Diamond Harbour where we have identified some interested women who wanted to initiate own business in handicraft. We have conducted several vocational and skill based trainings to rural adults. These vocational training sessions also entail future work opportunities. We will briefly explain our activities of upskilling and building competencies

A) Vocational Training programmes for adults

74 students 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 74 students, 38 students are enrolled in Certificate course in Physiotherapy & Activity Therapy (CPT) and 36 students are enrolled in Diploma in Physiotherapy & Activity Therapy (DPT). Second batch of Diploma in Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology started with 17 students and the students of first batch successfully completed their course.



B) Skill building and creating opportunities for SHG women in Kandi, Murshidabad

Using the NCore App (an app made by SIRG focusing on creating market opportunities for rural women) and the NexConnect Online learning App we helped both NexConnect and SIRG in connecting with the rural women self help groups. The INCD Team was instrumental in mobilising the rural women and conducting offline workshops.

In order to create market linkage of the rural women, we focused on giving some of the women market based design training by connecting them with experts. This was in tandem with NexConnect's objective of connecting experts with the rural women artisans through the online learning platform. One such market connect was making pouch bags.

These pouch bags were sent to Kolkata by a resource person. These pouch bags were a result of only three hours of online training. Looking at these products, the trainer said, “These women certainly have the outstanding skill to replicate things, what they need is finetuning of the



On going bag training at Kandi

Bags made after the training by the women

products”. Further to this Bag training, a unique initiative was taken by the Research Group which was an experimentation of a market linkage to a single woman from Kandi Federation.

We further identified a very interested rural artisan and gave rigorous training to her for three months. She displayed remarkable improvement and interest in making both handicraft products, stitching products such as pillow covers, blouses, table cloths etc. and in fabric painting.

In association with NexConnect we monitored the regular online interactions which happened between the rural women and expert trainers through NexConnect.

We have conducted offline Blouse training workshop to five rural women from Kandi Federation. These workshops were sponsored and supported by NexConnect Ventures. The phase of continuous training and exploring possibilities of market linkage was initiated in February 2018. Our field workers were continuously identifying five best skills that the 50 rural women possess which can be trained to make better and which has potential to be marketed.

The Blouse Training workshop was conducted in February 2018 by an Expert Trainer, Ruma Das. 12 selected rural women with prior knowledge of blouse making were given specialized



training on making Princess cut blouses which can later on be marketable. The research team has identified 12 rural women from earlier training interventions. The online training on designer blouses was provided for two consecutive days where expert trainer trained from

her house in Kolkata to women at Kandi using the online platform. 1 hour was dedicated for each training session. These women knew how to sew a blouse but what they didn't know was how to make customized and fitted blouse for the urban crowd. In this context the expert trainer started training the women how to make princess cut blouses first. The trainings happened on a blended mode. While some of our research associates were present in the trainer's house, recording the class from one end, some of them were stationed in Kandi to supervise and coordinate the training from the other end.

C) CAPACITY BUILDING OF RURAL WOMEN IN KOPAI AND DIAMOND HARBOUR

The objective of INCD is to enable the existing potential of the rural women and motivate them to become self-independent. While working in Birbhum, we found out that there was a large proportion of rural women who despite of having the basic skill of stitching were unemployed. Our Field level workers then engaged in finding meaningful ways to engage them properly.



In Kopai, Birbhum we identified a group of twenty women who had the basic knowledge of ‘Kantha’ stich. But, they were unable to create marketable products and sell them in the market. These women were eager to start their own businesses. Team INCD after identifying the need conducted several community level workshops and motivated the rural women and their husbands regarding nurturing their own skills and start own businesses. We spent two months mobilising these community levels artisans who wanted to get trained and further exploit opportunities. Further with help from NexConnect we started to train the rural women. Expert trainers from urban areas conducted online training workshops. We as part of Team INCD, conducted the offline sessions on making home furnishing items; such as kantha stitch on pillow covers, kantha stitch on bedcovers etc.

Diamond Harbour too is a place full of rural women artisans. Unlikely, those in Kopai, these women in Diamond Harbour were good in stitching and tailoring, but were not expert in any specific variety of handicraft. Therefore, our activity in this case was focused on training the women from Diamond Harbour with sellable products.

Workshops and conferences attended during 2017-18

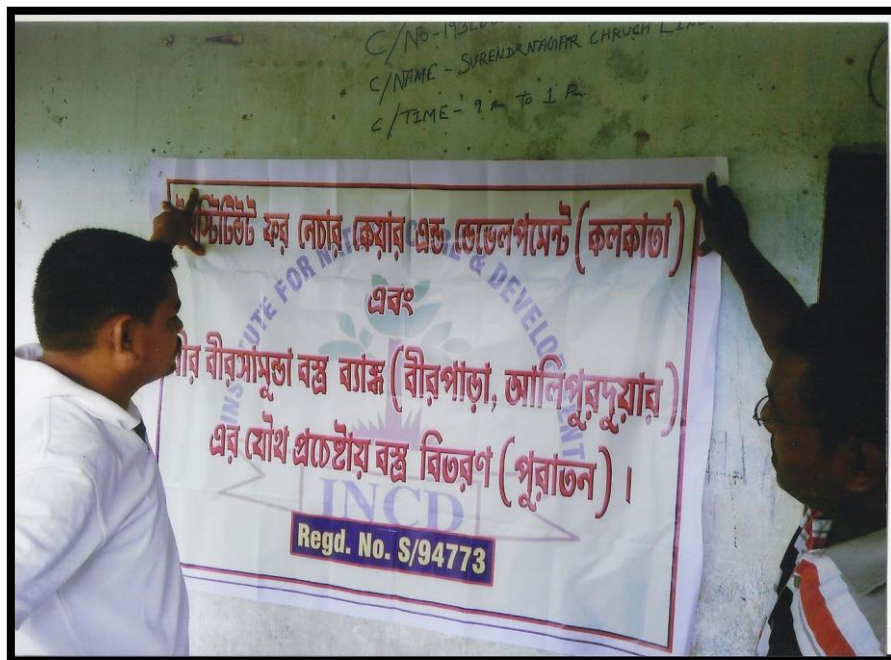
A conference was organized by West Bengal Association of Sports Medicine on 17.03.2018 at CMRI, Kolkata. 60 students from INCD participated in that conference and attended a hands-on session to learn various kinds of therapeutic procedures for shoulder rehab and sports injury.

Other welfare programs held during 2017-18

- Free Physiotherapy Camp was organized at Chetla in April 2017 where free Orthosis distribution is done to the aged people.
- Free Physiotherapy Camp was organized at Sankar Math, Ramrajatala, Howrah in June 2017.
- Free Physiotherapy camp (with free BMD test and distribution of free medicines) was organized in collaboration with Helpage India, a Kolkata based NGO for 250 aged people at Thakurpukur, Behala in July 2017.
- Free Health Camp and Physiotherapy camp (with free BMD test and distribution of free medicines) was organized in collaboration with Helpage India, a Kolkata based NGO for 310 aged people at Belgharia in December 2017.



- INCD in collaboration with the Bastro Bank of Alipurduar distributed clothes to the workers of closed tea gardens of Dimdima during 20.07.2017-21.07.2017.



- INCD went to Dubra near Jhargram to distribute clothes to the remote villages in January 2018.



Participation of INCD students and faculty members in Medical teams

INCD participated in the medical team of Special Olympic held in Kolkata.





Garment distribution in collaboration with Bastro Bank

INCD in collaboration with the Bastro Bank of Alipurduar distributed old garments to the workers of closed tea gardens of Dimdima.





CONCLUSION

This year we have focused on collaborating with various organisations be it social organisation or private bodies such as NexConnect. We are more and more believing in tie ups in order to give the dream of INCD a shape. We would like to continue these activities and impact more and more students and rural women and create opportunities for them.

Thanking You

Partha Protim Roy

(PARTHA PROTIM ROY)
SECRETARY