

ANNUAL REPORT OF INSTITUTE FOR NATURE CARE AND DEVELOPMENT 2018-2019



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 organization work towards mobilizing, 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 the 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:

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 largely on artisan profiling to understand socio-economic and opportunity-oriented conditions of the rural artisans across the state of West Bengal. We have worked extensively in the districts namely: Birbhum, Murshidabad and West Medinipur among others. Our field investigators have travelled to the villages in these districts and also met the rural artisans in several Melas and Village Haats that took place in and around Kolkata and the villages across Bengal. The purpose of the artisan profiling was to understand the level of artisan skills, market and resource related problems if any.

Artisan profiling across the various districts of West Bengal

A team of our field level investigators travelled to Santiniketan in Birbhum District and attended the Khowai Haat. Here they learnt that artisans had come from various villages like Ballabpur Amarkutir, Purbopolli, Sonajhuri Palli, Golpara Maha Sangha and others. The artisans practised many different kinds of handicrafts. While the artisans from Ballabpur Amarkutir showcased their skills with Katha switch, the artisans from Golpara Maha Sangha showcased beej works. Artisans from Purbopolli and Shyambari Fuldanga were largely garment artists and sellers. It was very interesting to see that a large number of artists ranging from multiple villages namely Sattor, Palsa, Sriniketan, Mohulara and Immamnagar practised kantha switch.

Our team had also visited the Bangla Natak Event in Kolkatta where a lot of artisans had come from many different villages like Sarta, Naya , Naroor , Masumpur, Maguria ,Bolpur Kachari and Chowkuri Sabang. The artists here were skilled in many different kinds of handicraft. From Sarta there was Maslan artists while the artists from Naya were skilled in the art of Potochitro. The artists from Chowkuri Sabang and Masumpur were skilled in Madur work and those from Bolpur and Magurai were skilled in wood and Shri Krishna Horn Products.

The team then visited Saros Mela where artisan from Diamond Harbour, Batabari, Daspur, Deuli, Bishnupur, Antila , Naya and Thakurnagar had come. The artisan showcased their skills in various products like katha, dokra, Wood crafts, Clay pots and Bead works.

In all the above-mentioned places the team studied the artisans and their handicrafts carefully. Post that the team successfully documented each artisan along with their skill set, their village and their contact numbers.



2. SCOPE: Skill, Competency, Opportunity driven Employability

We have conducted BSS-certified (under National Development Agency promoted by Planning Commission, Govt. of India) courses in physiotherapy & activity therapy. These vocational training sessions also entail future work opportunities.

A. Vocational Training programs for adults

107 students took admission in the BSS-certified courses in Physiotherapy & Activity therapy. Out of these 107 students, 57 students are enrolled in Certificate course in Physiotherapy & Activity Therapy (CPT) and 50 students are enrolled in Diploma in Physiotherapy & Activity Therapy (DPT). 17 students enrolled in Diploma in Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology course. All the students of 2018-19 batch who appeared for the exam successfully completed their courses.

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- Workshops and conferences attended by our students during 2018-19

A conference was organized by West Bengal Association of Sports Medicine in March 2019 at SSKM hospital, Kolkata. 55 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 2018-19

- INCD team attended medical camp at Rikisum (Kalimpong district) organized by Mountaineering Association of Krishnanagar.
- INCD team participated in CESC mini marathon on 17th Feb 2019 as paramedical team.
- Old cloth distribution is done in the Dubra village near Jhargram in June 2018.



B. Exploring the co-creation opportunities for the rural artisans of West Bengal by connecting them to urban entrepreneurs/ sellers through mobile App

The handicraft sector is the largest unorganized sector in the Indian economy. The work largely happens within the boundaries of home in the villages of the artisans. It is indeed a matter of pride that the handicraft sector in India is characterized by its uniqueness. However, this sector has failed to flourish. A team of interns from St. Xaviers University, Kolkata were engaged in the task of finding a way to connect the rural artisans and their products directly with the urban boutique entrepreneurs and sellers. Been divided into four groups, these student interns through processes of interviews tried to understand the entire artisan – entrepreneur ecosystem and identified ways to bridge the gaps between them.

Each team was given a location where they conducted a primary survey. During this process they were made aware of the various benefits and hurdles existing in the system. We also tried to take a feedback of an online platform that has the provision of connecting rural artisans with the urban buyers directly. The name of this platform is NCoRe which has been developed by the Research Team at SIRG, IIM Calcutta.

Hurdles:

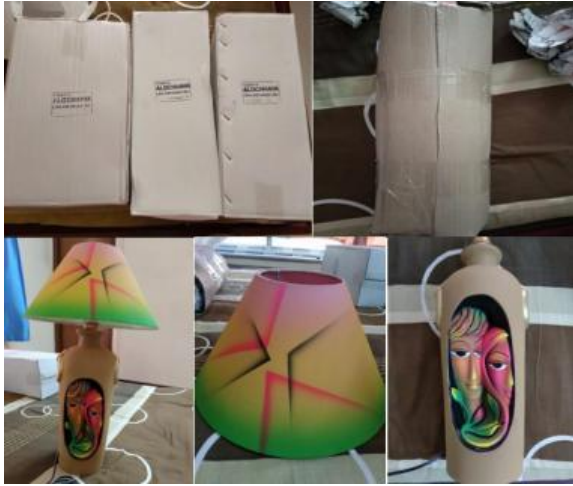
- a) Communication channel was barely established
- b) The presence of the middle man (money lenders, traders and agents) posed a serious threat as they always wanted larger profits. They bought the finished goods from the artisans in a low price and sold them to the entrepreneurs at high rates making it difficult to bridge the gap for both parties.
- c) The lack of digital knowledge among the artisans made this work more complicated because they showed less interest in installing the NCoRe app.
- d) A large number of artisans have moved away from their traditional handicrafts to working in a factory.
- e) The entrepreneurs wanted to see the finished products before ordering.

Benefits:

- a) The artisans were made aware of the existing market prices and the demand of the new generation.
- b) By using the NCoRe app the entrepreneurs now were exposed to a variety of designs, artisans and handicraft products.

Findings:

It was observed through the whole process that the artisans are interested in co-creation only when the orders are placed in a bulk. Secondly, the age old existence of a middle man only makes this channel more complicated. It is therefore necessary to eliminate the middleman for the channel to function properly. Thirdly, it was also observed that in the online market places, the entrepreneurs cannot flourish without expanding their customer base.



Workshops organized by INCD team in collaboration with SIRG & NexConnect

- Workshop on Collaborative Creation

On 23rd February, 2019 the workshop was organised by Social Informatics Research Group, IIM Calcutta in collaboration with our NGO and NexConnect Ventures Pvt. Ltd. This workshop was attended by several urban designers, entrepreneurs. NCoRe, a multi-platform (Web and App based) was introduced during this workshop to take feedback from the urban entrepreneurs whether they would be interested in connecting with the rural artisans and their products directly through the platform and also to know whether they are at all interested to know the process of making products by the rural artisans. Another aim of the workshop was to know whether it is important to educate and improve skill sets of the rural artisans in order to create market driven opportunities for them.

Collaborative creation, in this context indicates a joint venture between urban entrepreneurs and rural artisans. It refers to co-designing and co-producing. This platform serves as an online intermediary. After the order is given, entrepreneur can choose desired artisan with their skill set which matches his/ her demands. There is a direct linkage between rural artisans and entrepreneurs.

There was an interactive session conducted for both the artisans and the entrepreneurs. On one hand the artisans learnt the current trend and the demand and also how to use the app while the entrepreneurs were exposed to new materials and styles making the workshop beneficial for both.



- Workshop on Teachers Training

The workshop was held on 22nd December 2018 by SIRG, IIM Calcutta in collaboration with our organisation and NexConnect. The purpose was to make communication better between the teachers and the people who organize the teaching hubs. Both parties spoke about their grievances and an attempt was made to solve the same. The teachers also spoke about their experience during teaching the rural students.



Institute for Nature Care & Development

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