



**CREATING A
DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES
OF
THE POOR IN SUNDARBAN**

An Overview
of
Joygopalpur Gram Vikash Kendra

May, 2014



National Award- Indira Gandhi Paryavarán Puruskar

In recognition of its outstanding contribution to environmental protection, regeneration and awareness, Joygopalpur Gram Vikash Kendra received the Indira Gandhi Paryavarán Puruskar '2010 from the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India. On behalf of JGVK Mr. Biswajit Mahakur, Secretary received the Puruskar (Award) on February 19th 2014 from Mr. Verappa Moiley, Hon'ble Minister of Environment and Forest, Government of India. This is the first time, the Puruskar is received by an organisation from West Bengal state. This award has special significance for importance of conservation of fragile Sundarban eco-system.



INTRODUCTION

Joygopalpur Gram Vikas Kendras (JGVK) over 15 years history reflects the evolution of its own learning from experiences generated in the course of intervention to promote and create a change, transformation in the conditions of the poor in South-East Sundarban. In this overview historical tracking of JGVK's intervention has been documented.

The development process was initiated by the local youth. At the beginning JGVK focused upon livelihood development of poor, marginalised households through the optimum use of local resources by providing additional skills on their existing experiences and practices. Since beginning JGVK focused upon empowerment of the Grassroots (the poor and marginalised, deprived women) through mobilizing and organising poor into groups. All activities are planned and executed through Women led Village Committees (VC).

As the experiences showed positive results, demands for social development emerged. Then primary education, mothers and child health, public health, water, sanitation etc. became major intervention. Based on grass-root experiences and continued empowerment of the Grassroots, JGVK now roped in three essential parts in functioning (1) Networking at the regional level (2) Advocacy at the district, state level and share experiences for policy formulation and in operational guidelines for effective implementation of existing policy (3) Building partnership with academic institutions for generating new knowledge, synthesizing JGVK's experiences.

The overview also provides brief description of current activities of JGVK. We hope this document will help you to know the perspective, history and intervention of JGVK. If you are interested to know more about our organisation please contacts us, visit us.

Biswajit Mahakur,
Secretary

May, 2014



State Award - West Bengal Biodiversity Award (2014 to JGVK)

West Bengal Biodiversity Board acknowledges remarkable contribution made by GO/NGO/individual for conservation of biodiversity around West Bengal. Joygopalpur Gram Vikash Kendra was honoured to receive **Biodiversity Award 2014 from West Bengal Biodiversity Board** as “*Saver of Biodiversity*” for its valuable work in the most fragile island of Sundarbans. On behalf of Joygopalpur Gramme Vikash Kendra Mr. Biswajit Mahakur received the award from Mr. Jose P N Mathew, Member Secretary, WBBDB, Dept. of Environment, Govt. of WB on May 22nd. 2014 at Asutosh Birth Centenary Hall, Indian Museum on the International day for Biodiversity. The program was graced by the presence of Shri N.C Bahuguna, IFS, Principal Secretary of Forests & Head of Forest Force and Prof. Binay K Dutta, Chiarman, WB Pollution Control Board and eminent Panelists for panel discussion.



ABOUT JGVK

Joygopalpur Gram Vikash Kendra' (JGVK) means “*Village Development Centre*” is a non-government organization for 'rural reconstruction and development of environment and conservation of fragile coastal region of Sundarban' : JGVK has been actively involved in development activities since late 1990s and has grown to have significantly outreach in different blocks of South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas, Birbhum and Purulia districts of West Bengal state and adjacent Balasore and Bhadrak districts of Odisha state. Head office of JGVK is located at Joygopalpur village about 100 kms south of Kolkata. With 215 staffs volunteers (March'2013) JGVK has been able to reach 120 villages with populationa of over 250,000 in the above areas.

Few village youth from Joygopalpur and its surrounding villages have joined in late 1990's to do some development work for the local poor households. The organisation has been registered as 'Joygopalpur Gram Vikash Kendra' in May'2001.

Mission

Improve the quality of life with respect to food and social security through strengthening civil society, particularly through community based organizations in the selected rural West Bengal and Odisha state.

VISION

To secure basic livelihood and equal rights for all as well as sustainable development in the social, environmental and economic context

Registration Details:

- ♦ **Society Registration Act,** : S11/3567 of 2001-2002
Government of West Bengal dated May 17'2001
- ♦ **Income Tax Act, Government of India.** : DIT(E)s-21/BE/300/2002-2003
May 26, 2003
- ♦ **Foreign Contribution Regulation Act** : 147110715
(FCRA) Government of India December 30th2005
- ♦ **Income Tax (80-G) Act,** : DIE (E)/112/8E/300/2002,2003
Government of India June 10'2008
- ♦ Permanent Account Number (PAN) : AAA-TJ-5403A
Income Tax Department, Government of India.

Strategy

JGVK is an organization for social and economic transformation, dedicated to the participation and empowerment of poor, deprived, and marginalized households. The medium of work is through the poor organized women led, women now control and manage village committees and, the community based organizations (CBOs).

Field Based Activities of JGVK



Communication, networking and partnership for intervention of change



Capacity Development (including skill) for CBOs, staff, partners, institutional development and research and documentation for deepening grass root intervention and change.



15 YEARS HISTORY OF JGVK

KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

LESSONS

(1999-2001)

A few young members of “Taru Tirtha” from Joygopalpur village started the social work in Joygopalpur and surrounding villages like flood relief, teaches poor students, provide them text books, arrange support for marriage of daughter etc. of poor parents.

2000: The local boys & girls came in contact with Mr. Ganesh Sengupta Chairperson IGF, Denmark in 2000. He arranged some funds. He also acts as mentor of the organization.

- ◆ Clear realization “charity destroys, works builds”
- ◆ Need to involve, the rural poor for their own development
- ◆ Socio economic empowerment for rural poor women is the key to community development



(2001-2005)

2001: The local group obtained registration under society registration act.

2001-04: Pilot Animal Husbandry project activities started with the first funding of IGF.

2001: The First three SHGs formed in Joygopalpur.

2004: Started Non-formal Schools (but serious efforts) in Joygopalpur and few other villages. The school “Vivekananda Shiksha Niketan started operating with 25 children since then, now having 184 students & 18 teachers teaches upto class VIII. (2014) funded by Holdor Topse A/S Safe drinking water through removal of arsenic funded by UBU/IGF -Denmark

2005: The organisation got FCRA registration.

- ◆ **Income generation** among the local poor are needed and that too through home Industry revived and was able to bring supplementary income in the families.
- ◆ Organizing women's in groups (as CBO's) paves the way for better impact in community development initiatives.
- ◆ Children's quality education is the foundation for sustainability of all good moral values in traditional Indian society.



2005-2009

2005-06: Started Public/Social Health Programme in 20 villages for pregnant women.

2008-09: Health Clinic started in JGVK.

Ambulance service started

- ◆ **Observed** that the fall in infant mortality rate and increase in life expectancy are the outcome of improved public health programmes which includes sanitation, safe drinking water and health education.

KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

LESSONS

- ◆ **2008:** Started integrated programme on water, sanitation and Hygiene.
- ◆ **Water and sanitation related diseases reduced.**
- ◆ Pond sand filter-an innovative water filter installed at Gosaba block health centre. The system is still functioning & people attending the hospital as well as local inhabitants are drinking the water.
- ◆ Made people aware on the arsenic problems in some affected areas in the North 24 Parganas district.
- ◆ Collaboration established with Royal Veterinary and Animal University, Denmark, Bangladesh Agricultural University. Collaborative research on 'Experimenting Scientific fish farming with poly-culture'.
- ◆ Developed a 4.25 acre canal area as Demonstration fish farm.
- ◆ **2009:** Established fish Hatchery. Now about 600 local farmers are earning average Rs. 12-15000/- year from nursery pond and fish farming
- ◆ **Practice of participatory farmers field school methodology in natural resource management based work.**
- ◆ **2007: 15 days international workshop with scientists from six countries** shaped the perspective, strategies and intervention of sustainable organic farming in the area.
- ◆ **2008:** Established 8 acre farm for organic farming, for demonstration, training and production of organic products, experiment of new products.
- ◆ **2008:** Continuation of home industry programme with a focus on group based training of local women to produce skill based products and sale.
- ◆ **2009: An integrated initiative of education started;** coaching for weak students, computer training for students and youth, model school, non formal school centres etc.
- ◆ Small saving programme among the students for higher education, form
- ◆ **Realised** that women from the village itself can be trained as health educators and bring the changes.
- ◆ **Need to create pollution free rural environment.**
- ◆ **Realised** the need for more diversified local resource based economic activities for the local poor.
- ◆ **There is increasing womens involvement (Feminisation) of agriculture** in families with small and marginal holding due to out migration of men. So JGVK focuses on kitchen garden, compost preparation and training of women on organic farming practices is the answer for combating bio degradation and soil conservation.
- ◆ **Felt the need for** setting up a fish hatchery to produce good quality fish need.
- ◆ **Realised the need for conservation and sustainable consumption of small local fishes for malnutrition reduction & availability of small fish varieties.**
- ◆ **Realised** that destruction of land, water, plants due to excessive use of chemical fertilizer, pesticides, insecticides, and decided to promote organic farming in the area.
- ◆ **Realised** that combination of farm base agriculture and allied areas based work (fishery, animal husbandry) and cottage Industry can provide the viable livelihood to local population.
- ◆ **Felt the need for quality school education with additional learning support .** To reduce drop out at primary, high and secondary schools among the first generation learner's, support system like special coaching classes helped those children to continue studies.
- ◆ **Need for Activity based education.**
- ◆ Networking and linkage building is essential to support wider level intervention and sharing of experiences for replication in other areas.

functional' students environment groups'

- ◆ **2008: Publication of Ajker Basundhara** monthly periodical started.

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- 2010-2013**
- ◆ **2010:** Focus on Institutional and staff development through intensive capacity building through 'Partnership approach'.
 - ◆ Scholarship for school students.
 - ◆ **2011:** International exposure of JGVK staff, **participation in training workshop on 'Aid Effectiveness'** in Denmark.
 - ◆ Pilot IEC (2010-11) work followed by long duration IEC programmatic activity through partnership approach.
 - ◆ **2011-13:** Involve with a another programme in Kolkata Urban areas with 700 street food vendors with InnoAid.
 - ◆ Linkages with research institutions, academia were broadened to enhance greater synergy of theory and practice related to JGVKs work.
 - ◆ Involvement with government departments and access to government research and expertise in JGVK's work, involve in district and state level government committees.
 - ◆ **Started Literacy classes** for adult women.
 - ◆ Integrated development of poor households to develop as model effort.
- ◆ **Realised the need for institutional strengthening** and professional development of staff.
 - ◆ **Large-Scale indepth-intervention is needed in strengthening elected local bodies and ensuring participation of villagers especially women group members in Governance.**
 - ◆ Need for more user friendly information dissemination.
 - ◆ Improved processes and systems of documentation are needed to capture work experiences and contribution of JGVK.
 - ◆ Need for continuation of work with community based organizations, with particular focus on collectivization of SHGS into village level committees and strengthening them.
 - ◆ **Need to develop higher learning centres** and skill based training centre for the benefit of local people.
 - ◆ Village level bigger women groups as Village committees (leaders from each SHG form village committee) is a meaningful platform to address bigger issues in the villages
 - ◆ **Realized that literacy is an essential skill** for village women in JGVK's, efforts to improve their livelihood options and quality of life.
 - ◆ **Holistic development support require** for the development of poor households in the region.







JGVK STRUCTURE

GENERAL BODY (26 MEMBERS)



GOVERNING BODY (7 MEMBERS)
AND
MANAGING COMMITTEE
(SECRETARY AS CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER)



Units of JGVK

FIELD BASED ACTIVITIES

HOME
INDUSTRY

NR BASED
DEVELOPMENT

EDUCATION

HEALTH

IEC

ADM

HRD

F&A

SUPPORT UNITS



35 VILLAGE COMMITTEES (VC)



Vcs



SHGs



Vcs



SHGs



Vcs



SHGs

CBOs, CSOs and BENEFICIARIES

SYNOPSIS OF THE ACTIVITIES

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY PROGRAMME



The overall goal of this two phase programme (2003 to March 2010) was to raise living standard among the poorest families of 20 selected villages in Sundarban and to also contribute to sustainable environmental and social development. The programme has three separate but interrelated objectives. These are to : (1) organise the farmers' in SHG's and then involve SHG leaders into village committee (VC) (2) raise living standards among the

poorest families through Income generating activities, particularly livestock and thereby also improve their social life. (3) build the technical and extension capacity of JGVK and the partner organisation and the community Based organisation (CBOs) like SHG, VC, so that they become able to independently train and provide service to others.

As a result about 4800 women (4600 households) have been able to increase their income through this programme. JGVK is continuing animal husbandry programme in the interior, areas with poor households. That programme was implemented together with IGF and supported by DANIDA.

FISHERY PROGRAMME



Every family in this area of Sundarban has backyard ponds. They put these ponds in fish farming but systematic scientific culture is rarely seen. So the production rate is very low.

The purpose of this programme are (1) to raise household income through the development of scientific sustainable fish farming (ii) to increase nutritional intake

(Protein) among the poor household (iii) to Preserve local small fish species. The 4.25 acre farm area provide as a production cum demonstration and training centre for scientific fish farming. Till now 600 farmers have been trained and provide on-site support for improved fish farming.

These farmers have learnt how to prepare a pond, how to measure and maintain water quality. They are now able to collect and record the data related to growth and production. Now they are earning about Rs. 4,000 to 12,000/- additional income per annum from fish farming. The hatchery of JGVK provides good quality fish seed to the local farmers. This is the only hatchery in the locality. In the coming five years 3000 farmers will be covered and it is planned to set up a training cum research centre at Jyogopalpur.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROGRAMME



The purpose of this programme is to secure sustainable cultivation throughout the year along with higher production of agricultural products. Providing nutritional supplement to rural women, children in particular through vegetable cultivation, kitchen gardening and, multi-layer farming are the approach for intervention. JGVK has developed a 3 hectare experimental cum demonstration; training farm. It aims at developing of village level

model farm. Till now 1200 farmers got trained in organic farming, new varieties of crops and cropping, production of organic fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides and many of them are now engaged in environmental friendly agricultural practice.

In the coming period JGVK plans to (1) provide scientific inputs to the farmers e.g. soil testing and prescribe method of cropping practice (ii) institutionalize the 'Farmers field school concept' and its practice beyond JGVK, (iii) establish functional collaboration with government departments and research institutions, national and international experts (iv) processing of crops like sugarcane, maize, vegetables (v) Demonstration farm will be better organized in term of crop planning, experiment of introducing new crops, better documentation, training and extension (vi) sale / marketing of organic products (vii) access to a quality tag of JGVKs organic products.

HOME INDUSTRY PROGRAMME



The purpose of this programme is to increase the income of rural women living below poverty level through skill training and organize them, support them for home based activities. JGVK's massive movements for organizing rural poor women in SHG's and involve them in additional income generation are made sustainable through backward linkages with technology, raw materials and credit and forward linkages with market.

Till 2013 about 3500 women were trained in tailoring, pupped rice preparation, knitting, doll making, katha stitch, other hand embroidery, incense stick making etc. 1600 of those women are now working and earn Rs. 500 to 4000/- per month. In the coming period JGVK will (I) support them to form 'Producers Group' to develop business plan and to access finance from financial institutions and establish marketing linkage (ii) set up a vocational training school for rural youth (both girls and boys) for skill development / enhancement in mobile repairing, electrician, motor repairing fruit processing etc. This programme is funded by IGF and supported by CISU.

SOCIAL HEALTH PROGRAMME



The purpose is to improved local health condition like reduction of child mortality, maternal mortality, increase of institutional delivery, develop local women as health personal through training, peoples (women in particular) awareness on health issues. The extension activities concentrated in 20 villages and results have shown improvements compared to villages outside of project areas. The outpatient department at the JGVK campus is a useful

support to the local population.

A low cost pathological laboratory started functioning recently. A group of 35 village women, SHG member have been trained in basic medical care, women and children's' care and started working in the villages. JGVK have a plan to set-up a small affordable Hospital for low cost quality treatment of local patients.

EDUCATION PROGRAMME



This is an integrated programme of JGVK with 7 components. Its purpose is to improve quality of primary, secondary, technical and vocational education as it is critical to the rising aspirations of India's young people.

This is the flag-ship programme of JGVK. Successful implementation of this programme linked with human development, the development of future generation. This

project is supported by Holder Topsoe fund, Denmark.

- (i) Running a secondary model school 'Vivekananda Siksha Niketan' with residential facilities at JGVK campus with all facilities – computer training sports and games, library, recreation, etc.
- (ii) Community learning Centre in different needy areas (NFS);
- (iii) Running of 10 NFS in different villages ;
- (iv) Computer training for youth ;
- (v) Coaching for slow learners, first generation learners;
- (vi) Development of adolescent on healthy minds, moral values and its practices (Sabuj Sathi);
- (vii) Vocational training for school dropouts and others through livelihood school.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROGRAMME



The clear purpose of this programme is to improve the quality of life of the poorest of the poor through reduction of water and sanitation related disease problem. Besides support for awareness and innovative experimentation, there are two distinct contribution of this programme at the community level (i) awareness and action for use of toilet and wash of hands before taking food (ii) simple participatory study on arsenic content

measurement, depth of water level, extent of garbage generation and its disposal. These are possible with regular interaction among students, researchers and teachers of the Danish technical University (Denmark) and workers/volunteers of JGVK, Self help group members, villagers and partner organisations. There were other innovative contributions from this programme which includes installation of pond sand filter, arsenic removal filter, rain water harvesting, contraction of low cost toilet and sanitation infrastructure in schools. This programme we are implementing with a danish partner called UBU and local Government.

In the coming period the above activities will continue and expand the scope of the work.

WATER DISASTER RESILIENCE IN NORTH & SOUTH 24 PARGANAS



JGVK initiated a new project with fund resource & technology support from UBU, a Danish organization by the name water disaster resilience in North & South 24 Parganas since August 2014 till December 2017. The program started in four & three Gram Panchayets from Basanti & Gosaba Blocks respectively from South 24 Parganas and two each Gram Panchayets from Gaighata

& Sandeshkhali Blocks from North 24 Parganas. Around 54 village & block level volunteers are engaged in the project activities, working under the supervision & guidance from JGVK & UBU and DTU. JGVK is the primary partner of this project with five Civil Society Organizations (CSO). The three fold strategies included:

- ?Management of flood risks from cyclone and monsoon rainfalls
- Arsenic mitigation
- ?Investigation of decline of ground water tables in Basanti island

The primary activities encompass:

- Awareness, sensitization in the villages, school children, PRI functionaries to understand the reason of flooding & ground water depletion and identify appropriate mitigation, preparedness actions
- ?Advocacy with Public Authorities, local- district- State level govt. functionaries to implement the disaster mitigation plan
- ?Conduct research on ground water table, GP GIS, identify disaster prone areas in the villages

INFORMATION EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION PROGRAMME (IEC)



There are four important aspects of this programme. These are (i) improvement of the status of MDGs in the 8 Gram Panchayats through involvement of village committees and its SHG members (ii) making Panchayati Raj Institutions accountable to provide services, facilities to the poor people (iii) provide orientation to the SHG members on the government facilities available for them and

assist them to access these facilities (iv) dissemination of information among the target group.

JOY DU BANGLA



JDB programme aims at enhancing local condition through education and sustainable livelihood. Three main projects are implemented: classes for illiterate women, students school sponsoring and integrated house reconstruction program.

So far, the results obtained from JDB programs are the following : (a) 11 illiterate women schools have been

implemented which bring more than 150 women basics in Bengali, Mathematics and English, (b) 9 students are sponsored (school fees, books, tuition fees ...) until they hold the class 12 diploma and (c) 30 houses have been rebuilt (including toilets, kitchen garden, animal to be raised, fishery) and trainings on hygiene practices, animal rearing, fishery and organic cultivation have been provided

KOLKATA STREET FOOD HAWKERS PROJECT



Learning's and experiences of the pilot phase (2011-2013) the second phase of Street Food Project Kolkata has been officially launched on 1st July, 2014 which has been plan to be implemented by Joygopalpur Gram Vikash Kendra along with another NGO named as Gana Unnyan Parshad in the new area under Kolkata Municipal Corporation & Salt Lake sector V and local organization in partnership with

INNOAID, a Denmark based NGO. The objectives are:

- Create a scalable model of urban street food vending based on basic principles and guidelines of street food vendors legislation for 400 old vendors.
- ?To ensure street food safety provides *safe, hygienic and organic environment friendly high quality raw materials to street food vendors which will be produced by rural entrepreneurs in collective or individual mode.*
- ? ● Previously tested *educational and technical messages* will be delivered through *participatory workshops* with 1000 *street food vendors* & the impact will be assessing through Randomized Control Trial methodology.



Ambassadors of NORDIC Countries Visited JGVK:

On May 9th 2013, five Ambassadors from five Nordic countries including Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Iceland visited Joygopalpur Gram

Vikas Kendra. The team interacted with the students, teachers of Vivekananda Siksha Niketan, Women led village Committee members and programme staff. The team also walk along the village road and talk to the villagers. This visit is also a recognition of JGVKs work for the improvement of education among the poor children and work towards empowerment of poor women in remote Sundarban. This visit encourage and inspire JGVK team.





Paryavaran



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