

JEEVIKA DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

WHERE WOMEN GROW FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

(A registered NGO for the development of rural women)
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GENESIS & MISSION OF JEEVIKA

Jeevika in a local language Bangla means 'Livelihood'. Jeevika was formed in 1990 and became a registered NGO under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act in 1994. Jeevika works in 35 villages across three blocks in South 24 Parganas of West Bengal and has been successful in encircling 4000 women within its various programs. Jeevika facilitates various programs that enable these rural women to take a step towards establishing and protecting their rights. Through creation of various livelihood opportunities Jeevika continues to be a platform where 'women can grow from strength to strength'.

CORE AREAS OF JEEVIKA'S INTERVENTIONS

- Building financial institutions managed by rural women
- Promotion of women's rights
- Income generation programs

BUILDING FINANCIAL INSTITUTION MANAGED BY RURAL WOMEN

As a tool to empower the women, Jeevika launched the micro savings and credit program way back in 1990. Under this program, Jeevika provides support to rural women to establish their access and control over financial resources. Jeevika facilitates the capacity, enhancing programs with the women of its operational areas, so that they can run their own financial institution/federation. This institution delivers financial services to the women through the SHGs run by the women. Right now the number of SHGs is around 400 and the numbers of women organized under these groups are almost 4000. This intervention aims to create a strong women operated democratic, transparent, financially accountable savings and credit system.

PROMOTION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS PROGRAMS

Jeevika has found, the patriarchal challenges have become stiffer and more complicated for women to combat, Women's rights thus is the crosscutting issue in Jeevika's each and every intervention.

The women of the self-help groups campaign actively against violation of women's rights throughout the year. The women observe the international days like Women's Day and International Fortnight Protesting Violence Against Women and Girls through rallies, performance of plays, organizing seminars workshops etc. Jeevika even conducts gender training sessions and Wendlido training for the women of the self-help groups throughout the year.

Alor Disha, a forum of the rural women, evolved out of the active campaign against violation of women's rights carried out by the women of the self-help groups facilitated by Jeevika. Today this forum is run entirely by the volunteers (all members of Women Self-help Groups) and has established itself as a strong and independent body of its own. Protesting discrimination against women, violence on women and girls, and taking up cases of abuse on women and following them up, are the primary activities of Alor Disha, apart from running an active round-the-year campaign against violation of women's rights through performance of plays, drawing up of posters, etc.

The women of the self-help groups have formed an independent theatre repertory that performs plays based on gender issues. This group is provided technical support by the experts as and when required. Apart from the active campaign against violation of women's rights the performance of plays offer the women a chance and a platform to express themselves and at the same time motivates them to retain their cultural identities.

Creation of livelihood

Since its inception in 1990, Jeevika has been facilitating income generation program with the view of promoting livelihood opportunities among the rural women. Initially Jeevika conducted a six-acre farm for regular farming, pisciculture, and animal husbandry at Samali with an aim of economic development of the poor.

Since 1998 the focus of the income generation program has shifted to embroidery, tailoring and soft toys making and involves both training and production units. Over the years numerous rural women, primarily members of self-help groups facilitated by Jeevika, have been trained in the skills of embroidery, soft toys and tailoring. Around 40 women have joined the production unit and are successfully involved in catering to high-profile Fair Trade Organizations like Sasha Exports for the past seven years. There have been many

instances where the trainees have opted to work independently after completion of the training. Undoubtedly, the promotion of livelihood opportunities among the rural women goes a long way in empowering them socially as well as economically and paves way for them to have a meaningful and independent identity.

Since 2007 Jeevika has launched various initiatives to get the women included in the mainstream workforce. While sustaining the traditional avenues of livelihood generation, Jeevika ventured into the zone of new economic activities like launching IT-based enterprise development training, retail industry training and training in manufacturing of costume jewelry. The IT based ventures have been launched in partnership with Anudip.

Jeevika's ultimate goal for the income generation programs is to enhance capacity of the women to set up the stable enterprises that will be run by them. This implies the women need to be trained in the area of project management details and establish a strong niche for themselves in the market and possess strong trade skill. Jeevika also aims to include women in the mainstream employment market. For this purpose Jeevika targets at various other means of livelihood opportunities. As mentioned above, Jeevika has even introduced a computer training program which trains women to set up IT related small business enterprises of their own. Apart from the IT, Jeevika also imparted training on various other projects like Jewelry, Tailoring, embroidery and making of soft Toys. Thus these training projects serve dual purpose, livelihood generation as well as empowering women with latest technological developments.

In the Income Generation sector, Jeevika at present is emphasizing on SRI (System of Rice Intensification). Since the population of Jeevika's operational area consists of a large number of women and men who are involved with agriculture, Jeevika feels that an agriculture based livelihood generation activity would ensure the food security and enhance the skill and sustainable means of income.

SRI (System of Rice intensification)

BACKGROUND

The System of Rice Intensification, known as SRI, is a set of farming practices, developed to increase the productivity of land and water, as well as other resources. SRI is based on the principle of developing healthy, large and deep root systems that can better resist drought, water logging and wind damage. By applying the SRI method, farmers would obtain more rice, using less water by altering their planting methods. It has been proven that the SRI is more effective than the conventional method of planting, since it is able to boost rice production by more than 50 percent. The SRI method is also environmentally friendly as it needs 50 percent less in chemical fertilizers. Production costs are decreased because of fewer seedlings are used but yields are higher compared to conventional planting patterns. The conventional method is to plant 25-day-old seedlings at a depth of five centimeters, spaced 10 to 25 cm apart and with several seedlings in a single hole. The SRI uses seedlings less than 15 days old, planted

at a depth of between two and three cm, spaced at least 25 cm apart and a single seedling to a hole. Looking at the beneficial facts of SRI Jeevika team conducted an informal survey on SRI assessment through discussion and questionnaire filled up by the SHG members. The information gathered from this survey is as follows :

- Total number groups covered-----124
- Number of women(members of SHG's) covered -----around 1488
- Total number of villages covered-----29
- No. of Boro Farmers----- 665 (Includes group members and relatives/ neighbours)
- Percentage-----44.6%

Jeevika introduced the SRI in the cultivation of **BORO RICE** which started from the month of December 2008 as an experiment in few pieces of the land in the southern fringes of Kolkata. Though it is mentionable that despite a late start in comparison to the ideal time of BORO cultivation, Jeevika is quite successful in applying SRI's insights and practices.



SRI TEAM MEMBERS OF JEEVIKA

PRESENT ACTIVITIES

The System of Rice Intensification (SRI) is a method of increasing the yield of rice produced in farming; it emphasizes the quality of individual plant as well as quantity. It applies a less-is-more ethic to rice cultivation. Jeevika at present has been successful in encircling 17 farmers around the 29 villages and in 124 groups. Farmers who are engaged in SRI have been provided with all relative information and the technical guidance from the expert farmers of PRADAN. To give a start to this innovative set of practices called SRI Jeevika selected two set of farmers, firstly who started with the stage 1, from seed selection till the harvesting . Secondly who started from the stage 3, seedling raised in nurseries were being transplanted to the fields following the SRI approach . To keep on sensitizing the farmers and monitor the field officers and our SHG group member of Jeevika has been on a regular visits to SRI plots and farmers in different stages of cultivation . To facilitate the farmers Jeevika has even provided the CONO WEEDER , a hand held devise , which enable the farmers to remove the weeds as well as to aerate the soils facilitating better root development. Provided below the statistical datas of SRI undertaken by Jeevika for the season of BORO RICE cultivation :

S R I (System of Rice Intensification)

<u>SL.NO</u>	<u>VILLAGE</u>	<u>FARMER</u>	<u>LAND</u>	<u>STAGE 1</u> <u>(Seed selection)</u>	<u>STAGE 2</u> <u>(Seed bed sowing)</u>	<u>STAGE3</u> <u>(Seedling transplant)</u>
	HALDARPUKUR					
1		Bishwanath Naskar	1 Kata			24/12/08
	CHILABERIA					
2		Bholanath Naskar 9239536316	2 Kata			01/01/09
	ANGARBERIA					
3		Gopal Sardar 24980419	5 Kata	21/12/08	26/12/08	19/01/09
	RAJARAMPUR					
4		Magdalin Mondol	8 Kata	20/12/08	26/12/09	19/01/09
	PARBOTIPUR					
5		Aloka Naskar	5 Kata	20/12/08	25/12/08	20/01/09

		9051446802				
6		Kajal Das	1 Kata			20/01/09
	<u>POALIYA</u>					
7		Sabita Biswas	4 Kata			20/01/09
		9051446802				
	<u>RASPUNJA</u>					
8		Chhabi Sardar	11.5 Kata			26/12/08
		Chhabi Sardar	.5 Kata	19/12/08	25/12/08	18/01/09
		9748510379				
9		Mihir Sardar	2 Kata			23/12/08
	<u>AMGHACHIA</u>					
10		Parul Mondol	1 Kata			10/02/09
11		Chandana Duari	2 Kata	24/12/08	29/12/08	20/01/09
		9903610819				
12	<u>KASTAMAHAL</u>					
		Ratikantha Gayan	3 Kata	21/12/08	26/12/08	20/01/09
		9874933258				
13	<u>BOJBERIA</u>					
		Bidyut Mondol	1 Kata			28/01/09
		9007691632				
	<u>ABJAKHALI</u>					
15		Tapan Sardar	2 Kata			30/01/09
	<u>SAMALI</u>					
16		Shanti Sardar	2 Kata			17/01/09

		9748903755				
17		Saraswati Roy	.5 Kata			23/01/09
		9830293844				

- Total Land - 52 Kata (2.5 Bigha)
- Total Villages - 12
- Total SRI Farmers - 17
- Tillers in each plant(10 weeks) - 18 - 35
- Fungicide & Insecticide used - Baviston, Samadhan, Capital
- Fertilizer used - DAP, Pottash, Urea , Manure



SRI PROJECT OF JEEVIKA

FUTURE PLANNING

SRI method assessment project undertaken by Jeevika is still on its way to harvesting of the paddy for the Boro Rice in April. While this process continues, there is also a plan to extend this project to the ensuing Amon Rice (rainy Season). As Paddy is mainly grown in a large area during Boro season in this particular region of 24 Parganas, it is also very important to see the performance of SRI method in paddy crop grown in the rainy season. However Jeevika has already started making efforts to locate the various highlands which are away from the water logging during the rainy season.

To scale up SRI, Jeevika intends to launch a campaign to propagate SRI technique through various publication like pamphlets, posters, audio-visual materials and circulating it around the different areas where Jeevika has been operating since 1990 and has also planned to organize direct meetings with the experienced SRI farmers for sharing and cross learning. Apart from the various other efforts Jeevika has also been spreading the information and has liasoned with the agriculture department for the facilities provided to the SRI farmers, in subsidized rates.

Despite many open questions still to be investigated, SRI is proving to be a worthwhile practice to be promoted and should be included in any rice intensification program .



SHG FARMERS IN THE SRI FIELD



SRI PROJECT OF JEEVIKA (PRESENT STAGE)

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