

# ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014



*Towards sustainable livelihood.....*

## **Darabar Sahitya Sansad(DSS)**

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## **WHAT IS DARABAR SAHITYA SANSAD (DSS)**

It was in 1982 that some young boys, fired with the enthusiasm of a strong reading habit, began attending a rural library in the tiny village of Nishintapur in Balipatana block of Puri district to enlarge their knowledge, keep pace with developments in the state in particular and the country in general and at the same time satiate their literary inclinations. Gradually, this regular programme of reading newspapers and magazines led to frequent discussions on literary subjects.

Two consecutive floods in 1980 and 1982 devastated the area and caused massive human suffering. They saw the government machinery swing into action evacuating the marooned and distributing relief supplies. This sparked the innate quality of basic humanity that resides in every human being and these young men decided to form a 'society' to provide youth an opportunity and satisfaction of working for the development and welfare of the community. And this is how DSS came into existence as a catalyst for social change and justice and as a platform for literary creativity.

DSS has a vision. It envisages self-sufficient and self-managed villages in Odisha in which people from all communities, castes and creeds, live in peace and harmony, without fear of discrimination of any kind and with the courage and confidence to face natural calamities bravely.

In pursuance of this vision, DSS has launched a series of multifarious activities to build confidence among marginalised and weaker sectors of society to successfully and fruitfully manage their socio-economic and political development. DSS lays stress on encouraging geographically and socially vulnerable communities like women, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, artisans, landless labourers, marginal farmers and others to participate in the mainstream of society and consequently enjoy the fruits of development.

## **AREA OF OPERATION**

DSS has spread its multi-pronged activities over 150 villages in three coastal district of Odisha—Puri, Khordha and Baleswar. We plan to extend our operation to Kandhamal and Rayagada district also.

## **LEGAL STATUS**

DSS is a duly registered non-governmental organisation (NGO) with the following official agencies:

1. Registered under the 'Societies Registration Act of 1860' vide No. 719/279 of 1984-85.
2. Registered under the 'Foreign Contribution Regulation Act of 1976' with the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India vide No. 105020062.
3. Registered under section 12(A) of Income Tax Act of 1961.
4. Registered under section 80(G) of Income Tax Act of 1961.

## **EXECUTIVE BODY**

DSS is managed by a 11-member Executive Body whose tenure is for three years. Members are elected in the Annual General Body meeting.

Currently, the Board is composed of the following members:

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Designation</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
1.	Dr. Adwita Kumar Patra	President	Agriculture Consultant
2.	Mr. Shrikant Kumar Mohapatra	Vice-President	IT professional
3.	Mr. Kedareswar Choudhury	Secretary	Social Dev. Worker
4.	Mr. Rajanikant Mohanty	Asst. Secretary	Social Dev. Worker
5.	Mr. Mohan Kumar Baliarsingh	Member	Dev. Consultant
6.	Dr. (Ms.) Anusuya Dash	Member	Doctor (Sr Lecturer)
7.	Ms. Nivedita Nanda	Member	Craft Teacher/Designer
8.	Mr. Subhash Chandra Nayak	Member	Educationist/Lawyer
9.	Ms. Laxmipriya Sahoo	Member	Women's Dev Activist
10.	Mr. Debaraj Sahoo	Member	Craft Teacher/Designer
11.	Ms. Menaka Pradhan	Member	Women's Dev Activist

### **ACTIVITIES DURING THE YEAR**

#### **1. SECURING LIVELIHOOD FOR WOMEN**

##### **1a. Empowering Women Vegetable Growers Cooperatives in Nimapara and Balipatana blocks**

DSS launched a project in Nimapara and Balipatana blocks to enable women to earn an income of their own to supplement the efforts of the family. The project will be spread over three years and began in January 2013. The area covered was 20 villages in the two blocks and envisages targeting 500 women to form vegetable growers cooperatives and train them in state-of-the-art agricultural practices including crop planning, financial management, cooperative management, and organic farming. The project also includes the setting up of a sales centre, grading centre and sinking borewells.

With support and funds from Madhyam Foundatio and AWO International two cooperatives have been set up and working with good success in the villages of Kasia Sasan in Nimapara block of Puri district and Marthapur of Balipatana block of Khordha district. DSS field staff comprising 3 fulltime workers and 2 volunteers make regular visits and conduct meetings with the members of the cooperatives, collect their savings and use it to make loans to needy members. During the last financial year Rs.1,13,831 was collected through savings mobilised from .540 members. From this amount Rs.2,60,000 was advanced as loans to 84 members to develop their cultivation of vegetables. Besides ensuring the smooth and efficient running of the cooperatives, the DSS staff and the members developed a local seed bank from which 64 members borrowed seeds, supplied seeds obtained from various sources, and trained members in crop planning, organic farming, cooperative management and assets. Through collective marketing initiatives, the cooperatives sold Rs. 2,40,000 worth of vegetables in the Bhubaneswar mandi.

DSS managed to link the cooperatives with government schemes enabling the members to avail of their benefits. Over 178 farmers received seed minikits, 13 received pumpsets, 376 got vegetable sorting trays and 4 SHGs received SGSY grants of Rs. 10,00,000. Besides, 311 women farmers prepared and used organic manure and pesticide (Handi khata and Jeevamruta),

With help from the donor, the DSS staff and members of the cooperative boards successfully managed and operated a seed store, grading centre, sinking of a borewell, installing 6 water lifting

pumps and many other activities. That this project has been welcomed and made people aware of the benefits of cooperation is the fact that most of the women farmers have doubled their income during the year through the intervention of DSS and help from the donor.

**1b. Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP)  
(Women Farmers Empowerment Programme)**

A project to empower women farmers with skills to improve their farming practices and thus increase productivity was undertaken in 12 villages of Balipatana block of Khurdha district with the active support of National Women Livelihood Mission (NRLM)/Odisha Livelihood Mission (OLM)/Madhyam Foundation (Bhubaneswar) from July 2013 to March 2014. A project head was assigned who trained 9 community resource persons (CRPs) and 2 para professionals (PRPs) at state and district level to impart knowledge to women farmers to increase their income by exposure to latest farming practices, proper crop planning, use of organic manure and fertiliser, etc.

During the first nine months of the three-year project 450 women farmers were trained in 21 sessions in crop planning, soil testing, SRI paddy cultivation, organic farming, plant protection and seed treatment. Another 100 women farmers were taken on a trip to Banki to expose them to the latest methods of planned vegetable cultivation. Profiles of 450 women farmers were prepared and 321 women farmers were advised on cultivation of 161 acres of vegetables using modern farming practices. Besides, using the knowledge gained in the training sessions, 20 women farmers took up cultivation of summer paddy using the SRI technique over 17 acres. The benefit that accrued to them by this activity was that inputs had decreased by 50 percent and the current development of the plantings indicated that a rich harvest was in the offing.

In another sphere of activity, 114 women farmers were encouraged to prepare organic manure and fertiliser (Handi katha and Jeevamruta) out of cowdung and urine which they used in their fields resulting in increased production and improved quality. The CRPs and PRPs succeeded in motivating 230 women farmers to prepare proper crop plans and adhere to it in their fields.

All the women farmers who were covered by the project have got together and formed a vegetable producers' cooperative. The project has been in existence for a short period of only 9 months but the encouraging results is attracting more farmers, not only women but also men who are keen to adopt the methods used by the trained women farmers to reduce inputs, increase productivity and also their income.

**1c.(i). Enterprise Promotion for Women through Cooperative strengthening**

Carrying forward the work DSS had been doing for the last 15 years, its staff conducted regular meetings every month with women self help groups in 118 villages in Khordha and Puri districts. The total number of SHGs that the DSS liaised with was 492 with a membership of 6828 women. DSS also helped in the formation of a thrift and credit cooperative named Samruddhi Samabaya Ltd. and liaised regularly with the members, reviewed progress, maintained their books of accounts and managed their credit and thrift activities. DSS succeeded in establishing credit linkages between the SHGs and banks to obtain loans for income generating activities.

Samruddhi Samabaya is now firmly established with 987 women members who have accumulated a total savings of Rs. 1,07,200 and circulated Rs. 7,86,000 as internal credit.

**1c.(ii). Enterprise Promotion through linking with micro loans. (RANG DE)**

In the financial year 2013-14, DSS, with the assistance and support of Rang D.org (Bangalore), continued to promote livelihood development among women by motivating them to take up

entrepreneurship with loans for feasible projects. In this year under report, 320 women were assisted by Rang De, taking the cumulative number to 620. A total of Rs. 24,10,000 was disbursed by Rang De to promote entrepreneurship in handicrafts, dairy, poultry, goatery, sheep rearing, fishery, small retail vending, and similar income generating projects. The credit is supposed to be repaid to Rang De in 12 equal instalments with 8.5% rate of annual interest. The women entrepreneurs have repaid regular instalments. A sum of Rs. 18,00,500 was repaid to Rang De during the year and the balance is due in monthly instalments in the next financial year, i.e. 2014-2015. DSS has a plan to link 500 women entrepreneurs with Rang De next year.

In this context, it might be mentioned that DSS cooperates by encouraging the formation of women's self-help groups and activity based cooperatives, organising meetings to provide livelihood guidance and conducting regular training and exposure programmes.

## **II. MIGRANT LABOUR SUPPORT PROGRAMME**

This 3-year project began in August 2011 and will end in July 2014. It is supported by the Jamsetji Tata Trust, Mumbai, and is expected to be extended for another three years. It is aimed at empowering migrants with knowledge about legal awareness about their status and rights, especially when they work outside their state and provide them with proper documentation to enable them to be officially recognised as migrant labourers. It also aims at providing them with skills to enable them to earn a decent livelihood in their native villages thus eliminating the need to search for a livelihood elsewhere.

During the year under review, DSS personnel totalling 9, continued to run two centres (Shramik Sahayta O' Soochana Kendra) in Balipatana in Khurdha district and Nimapara in Puri district. The staff interacted with migrant labourers, construction workers and youth who might be planning to migrate in search of good earnings.

### **Registration and I- card issue:**

With an aim to tackle the issue of illegal migration and the problems there of , DSS continued to register the migrant workers at Panchayat level by registering them through 2 centres. The data compiled has been shared with Panchayats, blocks and District labour officer. In the year 2013-14, the centres registered 1944 migrants and issued identity cards to them.

### **Survey of Migration trends:**

A survey was undertaken in 38 gram panchayat areas (GPs) in both the districts of operation to track migration trends and 18 camps/clinics were organised in which 1,327 participants were explained their legal status and rights as migrants. Various labour laws were also explained. Those with legal cases were advised on the procedures to be followed. Disputes between labourers and employers were settled and compensation totalling Rs.68910.00. was obtained from the latter and distributed among 14 migrants.

Health camps (9 in all with 299 beneficiaries) were organised for migrant workers and their families during which they were subjected to medical check ups, educated on health practices and medication prescribed if they were found to be suffering from any illness or disease or health hazards caused by their occupation..

### **Furthering employment opportunity for youth and returnee migrants.**

To dissuade and discourage potential youth from planning to migrate to earn a decent and respectable livelihood, skill training programmes of one month duration were organised by two centres. A total of 120 potential and returnee migrants were trained in motor driving, mobile repairing and masonry, 40 in each trade. It is gratifying to note that all of them are either suitably placed in good jobs or are self-employed.

### **Destination visits**

DSS also organised destination visits to Chennai in Tamil Nadu and Aloha in Kerala where youth from its area of operation were working in different companies and on construction sites. It was found that the migrant labourers there were having problems about suitable and timely wages, were living in poor insanitary conditions, were subject to a weak or insufficient compensation process and had no job security. The DSS team conducted awareness programmes, explained their rights and privileges to the migrants and also about the activities of the DSS shramik kendras in their respective districts. The participants in the programmes were given awareness material, labour diaries and also issued with identity cards.

### **Left behind women**

A corollary to the incidence of migrancy from the villages of Odisha is the plight and status of the women left behind in the native places. A survey was commissioned by DSS in which a study group and a control group was identified in 19 villages in Nimapara block resulting in the observation that left behind women of migrants have become more vulnerable to various adverse socio-economic effects that were having a serious deleterious effect on their physical and mental well-being.

Some of the findings revealed by the study are:

1. 35 per cent of left behind women have one child whereas only 22 percent of the others restrict their children to one.
2. Left behind women prefer to stay with either their families or their in-laws with at least 6 members.
3. The number of left behind women maintaining livestock is less (66%) that those of non-migrant families (83%)
4. Left behind women have less bank accounts that wives of non-migrants.
5. Only 55 percent of left behind women are members of SHGs while 71 percent of non-migrant wives are members of SHGs.

### **Forming Collectives Of Construction Workers**

DSS was able to motivate 226 construction workers to form two collectives—Jaydev Nirman Shramik Sangh in Balipatana and Basudev Nirman Shramik Sangh in Nimapara. They have conducted 24 meetings and three training programmes were held for the office bearers in leadership development and collective management. The collectives have applied to the Deputy Commissioner of Labour to be registered as trade unions. Besides, 126 construction workers were registered with the Construction Workers Welfare Board (CWWB) so that they can avail the benefits under various government schemes.

### **Stakeholders awareness**

DSS organised a block level meeting of stakeholders to arouse awareness about the problems of migrants, ensure the safety and proper working conditions of migrant, discuss livelihood options in the native village itself for intending migrants and also for returnee migrants, that is either those who have come home for a short period or completed their tenures in other areas. The meeting was attended by the BDO, SEO 8 sarpanches, the president of the local press club and a large number of migrants.,

## **DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

### **Response to Phailin Cyclone**

Within two weeks of the disastrous Phailin cyclone wreaking widespread damage and untold misery in at least six districts of Odisha in October 2013, DSS led by the head of the organisation and a team comprising a field manager, four supervisors, and 10 local volunteers and para resource persons (PRPs) swung into action and headed for Bhograi block in Balasore district to render relief to the afflicted assisted by Concern Worldwide India. The villages of two gram panchayats of the block—Mahagav and Gunasaritha—had been under water for over a month and the residents had shifted to school buildings and canal embankments. Official relief assistance was minimal.

For full two months, the DSS team working from a warehouse it had set up in Baleswar worked long hours and under distressing circumstances to provide relief as many disaster-stricken persons as possible. Bhogarai block had been selected because DSS had rendered relief assistance earlier too there with the support of Concern World Wide India and ECHO in the aftermath of the disastrous floods that hit the area in 2007 and 2009. The work was so well implemented that it drew appreciation from ECHO.

After identifying the flood affected, assessing the damage to property and livestock, strategy was worked out to provide shelter, food and arrange water/sanitation, as these were areas needing immediate intervention. Subsequently, shelter kits comprising tarpaulins for roofing and flooring, nylon rope, and a mosquito net were distributed to 1000 households. Besides, 2000 households were given food parcels containing 3 kg of flattened rice, 1 kg of sugar, 2 kg of moong dal (pulses) and 1 kg each of cooking oil and salt. Sanitation kits were also given to 2000 households, each kit containing 1 plastic bucket with lid, a 1.5-litre jerrycan with screw cover, two pieces each of bathing and washing soap. In addition, bleaching powder in quantities of 25 kg each were distributed among 19 villages and 11 hamlets to prevent the spread of disease.

Though the DSS intervention could provide relief materials to only 50 percent of the households, the programme was conducted efficiently and peacefully. On 19 November 2013, the distribution was observed by Ms. Denise Holland, Country Representative of Concern Worldwide along with Finance Officer Mr. Bhabesh Mishra. They expressed their satisfaction at the pace and progress of the relief programme.

However, it was realised that the two-month programme was only a short-term effort to mitigate the suffering of the people and a long-term development programme was necessary to sustain local livelihood and also prepare to face natural disasters to which this area is prone. DSS will be glad to join hands with any private or official organisation in this endeavour.

### **A success story**

Just one case study is enough to indicate the extent of misery and hardship people in this area confront in their daily lives and how immediate and effective relief does provide an element of succour and help. Bisu Soren (58) son of Jayaram Soren lives in Daruha village, gram panchayat Mahagav, Bhograi block, Balasore district. He is a landless labourer and he and his wife support a family of seven sons and daughters with whatever they can manage to earn through daily labour. To supplement his meagre income he does a little share-cropping. By this he obtained a share of paddy cultivated on 50 decimals of land which would have supplied his family with food for four months. But this, and the two-roomed mud and thatched house he lived in was washed away in the floods.

He shifted his family to a school on high ground where they were given food for three days. Government relief was in the form of Rs. 300 cash and 25 kg of rice. Work was unavailable and his age prevented him from migrating. Villagers helped him with a little cash and kind to build a temporary hut.

It was then that DSS relief supported by Concern Worldwide India came as a blessing for him. He was given the shelter, food and sanitation kits. He said that he would now be able to partly rebuild his house. His gratitude was evident on his face as he spoke about the dal and cooking oil he had been given. "These are luxury items for us as they are too expensive for us to buy. Dal which sells at about Rs. 100 a kilo is a rare item in our food," he said.

He now needs three things to set him back on his feet with dignity. First is adequate labour for income. Second is financial aid to invest in summer paddy and resume his share-cropping activity. And thirdly is that his house is rebuilt and made strong enough to withstand future floods.

His dream of fulfilling his three major pressing needs is not his alone. It is shared by hundreds of other residents of the area who become victims of floods and are driven out of their homes time and again. Development to enable Bisu Soren and his fellow residents is the need of the hour.

### **USHA SILAI SCHOOL PROGRAMME**

Continuing this activity from last year, DSS, with the support of REACH India and USHA Intl. trained 10 teachers who then set up tailoring training schools in 12 villages with machines provided by USHA in Balipatana block. This effort resulted in 169 young women being instilled with skills for a reasonable remuneration earning vocation. Although it was one time assistance from Reach India/Usha, DSS continued monitoring the activities and tried to enrol as many as young women in these 10 schools so that they come out with tailoring skill and become employable.

### **HANDICRAFT PROMOTION PROGRAMME**

DSS supported the women artisan clusters developed in Balipatana and Pipili. Over 400 women artisans who had been supported by DSS, DC- Handicrafts and UNDP in past years, were assisted with social security and business development support by DSS team. Without any external funding, the DSS handicraft team tried to link them up with schemes like, Artisan Identity cards, Health cards( Rajiv Gandhi Silpi Swasthya Bima Yojana) sponsored by DC- Handicrafts,GOI. 321 women artisans were linked during this year. Besides DSS facilitated the artisan groups attending 11 exhibitions during this year effecting 7.5 lakhs of sale. DSS also linked 36 artisans with low cost credit.

DSS has identified 2 handicraft( artisan ) clusters in Kandhamal and Rayagad districts. It was found during two consecutive visits to the clusters that artisans face livelihood security problem despite the efforts from Government. DSS has decided to take up activities in these two "Dhokra" clusters in coming financial year.

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