

ABOUT

Society for Research and Rudimentary Education on Social and Health Issues (SRREOSHI) was formed by Sikha Roy an Ashoka Fellow in 2005 and stands out as one of the few women-led organisations which have exposed the issue of land and livelihood rights for women and is trying to break all taboos. It primarily focuses on sustainable and integrated development of excluded tribal women and youth groups in districts of Bankura and Burdwan in West Bengal, India.

SRREOSHI's operations around Bankura and Burdwan District



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Mission

To ensure women and adolescent girls' rights to land and livelihood, health education and protection leading to their social and economic empowerment.

Vision

To equality, dignity and justice for all women leading to their social and economic empowerment.

River



ANNUAL REPORT

2014-15



Numeric Data of SRREOSHI's outreach

District	Block	GP	Village	Group
Bankura	3	8	60	300
Burdwan	2	2	3	30

District	Sub-Division	Ward	Slum	School	Beneficiary Outreach
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Burdwan	Asansol	18	5	10	2300
Burdwan	Durgapur	6	3	6	1400

Aim & objectives



- Livelihood – land and property rights and the issues of livelihood, particularly those of women
- Women's Rights – their access to and control over resources and the different kinds of violence they face, as linked to their land and property rights, and also as a separate issue

PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES at A GLANCE

GRAMODAYA- A RURAL AWAKENING at Ramarbhui Village in Bankura District.





Gramodaya' – A Rural Awakening, 'A Rural Education Model', supported by OASiS, Bhopal, M.P, for Youth Group of 40 members in the village of Ramarbhui with a vision to create a platform for sustainable and integrated rural development, through relevant quality rural development education. Importantly, to create a backbone of rural development qualified professionals in rural areas, who can ensure sustainability for themselves and their villages, by doing development in rural areas.

LAND and LIVELIHOOD RIGHTS



The societal notion that “a plot of land is an asset, key to dignity, position in society, maximization of food security and a sustainable livelihood”, the organization started working with marginalized and socially excluded tribal women. These women were provided access to land and various livelihood opportunities like organic farming, making handicrafts from the available natural resources were created. Tribal women leadership development program is an ongoing project which is supported by the *Jamunalal Bajaj Foundation*.

MARGINALIZED ADOLESCENT GIRLS





SRREOSHI intervenes with marginalized adolescent girls (school going and non-school going) in urban and rural areas of Burdwan District (Durgapur and Asansol Sub-Divisional) to create awareness, increase knowledge, and build capacities in a rights based mode on issues of violence against women and gender discrimination including, early marriage, self-management/ life skills, gender, and Sexual and Reproductive health (SRH) . This project was supported by *United Ways*, Kolkata.

JUTE BAGS and Babui grass Handicrafts Training Program



The sole aim of SRREOSHI is to make its beneficiaries self-dependent. Various income generation programs are conducted in the thematic areas. One of them is the Jute Bags and Babui Grass Handicrafts training. This ongoing project is supported by the CSR Department of *IISCO, SAIL, Burnpur*

ORGANIC FARMING



Organic Farming is important in terms of people's food security; it reduces the risk of production failures and contributes to strengthening the communities. The eco-system required for organic farming is naturally inter-dependent. The organic produce is bountiful, healthy and reliable. Adequate training and infrastructure for

maximizing food security through organic farming has been provided in Farashdanga and Nonagora, villages in adjoining areas of Durgapur. This program is conducted in collaboration with the CSR Department of *ASP, SAIL, Durgapur*.

ORGANIC PRESERVATION CENTER



Organic Preservation Center thrives on the concept of co-operative style seed bank or community seed bank. Seed saving is a practice that farmers and their families have been engaged in for a long time. It has allowed them to cultivate a large number of different local varieties, which have been able to adapt to nature's vagaries, such as shortage of water, strong winds, limited soil nutrients and so on. A small-scale Organic Seed Preservation centre is set up at the Durgapur Office.

Through a community seed bank, farmers play a key role in the development, maintenance and promotion of agro-biodiversity, in particular women given their traditional roles in selecting and saving seeds as well as in raising awareness on the diversity of traditional varieties among all members of a community.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Income generation program at Ramarbhui village supported by Lilaboti Trust.
- Attended International conference for Social Entrepreneurship at TISS, Mumbai
- Exposure visit to Elgar Prathisthan, Paromita Goswami, Asoka fellow in Maharashtra
- Exposure visit to Vivekanda Seva Kendra O Shishu Uddyan (VSSU), Kapil Chandra Mondol, Ashoka Fellow at South 24 Parganas, West Bengal

OUTCOME

- ❑ Awareness generation in the community.
- ❑ Healthy bonding between groups.
- ❑ Group members are motivated to fight for their rights to land and society.
- ❑ Capacity building of group members and employees. Participation and decision making power developed.
- ❑ Linkage with Local Govt. and Lok Adalats in Bankura and

TANGIBLE CHANGES

- **Strengthening the work on women's rights to land and livelihood at individual level:** SRREOSHI's present work on women's rights to land, giving priority to women, issuance of single patta in the name of women and inclusion of women's name in the pattas already issued i.e., issuing of **joint land titles- patta**. Earlier mostly *patta* was issued in the name of husband or other male member of the family. Thus women were deprived of right to land. SRREOSHI has intensively worked on this issue to sensitize women, society and officials to ensure women's legal rights to land by including their names in the new and existing *pattas*. A total of around **200 applications (70 tribal families and 45 women)** for patta generation in the identified villages are under process.

- **Group acquisition of land and issue of pattas:** SRREOSHI has a strong linkage with the Panchayat. Land is identified by Panchayat and BLRO for acquisition of the groups. This year round, one of the major activities were advocating with the Panchayat for issuance of single and joint *pattas* and generating awareness within the group regarding joint cultivation.
- A total of 49 women (widow and married) secured their right to land and family property.
- **A total of 20 acre vested** land was acquired by women's group and applied for NREGA work on this land. 6 tribal groups consisting of 180 tribal women and 63 Non-tribal women benefited from this. 240 women got forest land *patta*.
- SRREOSHI has always given importance to advocacy work. Through advocacy initiatives NREGA schemes are being implemented on the land acquired by women's group. This generates livelihood opportunities for the tribal women. Women's participation on NREGA is increasing, as they get chance to work on their own land within the premises of the villages. Earlier, they had to go far for doing similar work. Now, women are involved in nursery plantation, which has produced a high yield.
- A total of tribal 20 groups (200 members) worked in preparing nursery under NREGA scheme.

- A total of 45 cases related to Violence against Women, and land were discussed and handled in Lok Adalat.
- Under ICF supported project a total of 1700 adolescent girls (09-19yrs) attended various training programme for developing life skills and confidence necessary to master the present phase of change. This program also provided information regarding sexual and reproductive health to the adolescent girls. It also helped to create a space where girls can break free, raise, discuss and address issues concerning their lives and surroundings.
- Apart from these Women's groups of Ramarbhui, Simulberia, Kherobari in Bankura district benefited from various income generation programs like mushroom cultivation, organic vegetable gardening, Vermi-compost, jute bags, *sal* plate making, and *babui* grass handicrafts making.
- In partnership with OASiS, Bhopal Gramodaya' – A Rural Awakening, 'A Rural Education Model' is one of SRREOSHI's successful and ongoing projects.

CHALLENGES

- Creating awareness about Women's equal rights to land and property is a matter of great challenge.
- At times there is political opposition, which is a painstaking hindrance.
- One of the major areas of concern is identification of arable land.
- People lack awareness of women's ownership to land and property. The State Government of West Bengal has formed specific provisions for the excluded tribal women but the community lacks awareness and understanding of the existing policies.
- Existing patriarchal norms prevent women to demand their share of land.

FUTURE PLAN

- Strengthening of leadership quality within the group for spearheading the movement in the future.
- Life Skill Management Training program to be

LEARNING

Political opposition is a major concern that impediments the execution of projects, since active participation of the government at local levels is very important. Though West Bengal is recognized as pioneer among Indian States in implementing land reforms and measures to benefit share croppers and

redistribute ceiling surplus land to the landless, failed to target women. Identifying land still remains a challenge and an area of concern. In the present political scenario of West Bengal development work are getting hampered due to political threats. It is difficult to work neutrally, for the sake of marginalized people.

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SUCCESS STORY



This is a success story of thirty tribal women entrepreneurs in Keradih village who are engaged in making Jute bags for the past two years. The region is well-connected to the nearest cities, and has adequate electricity and water supplies. There are certain drawbacks persisting in the area, like poor sanitation and drainage facilities. Prior to SRREOSHI's intervention, few women were working as maids in houses, and few were engaged in training in tailoring facilitated by IISCO Steel Plant, Burnpur as a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiative. However, this initiative didn't work out well because the CSR team was not effective as they left before finishing the training and sewing machines were no longer in good conditions. SRREOSHI formed a group and trained them in making jute bags and handicrafts of *babui* grass for self-employment. They are from poor tribal families and needed to increase their household income.

SRREOSHI empowered these *Santhal* women by linking them with IISCO Steel Plant, Burnpur as a CSR initiative, to avail new sewing machines and capacity build-up in making jute bags and handicrafts of *babui* grass. As part of a six month CSR initiative, they were trained in making jute bags and handicrafts. Four months was spent in training. For the rest of the period, i.e. two months they made products

for selling and were able to earn Rs.10, 000/- from jute bags and Rs. 2,000/- from sale of handicrafts. All raw materials, tools and machines were provided by SRREOSHI. A zero balance account was opened for them. Now the group has Rs. 12,000 in their account.

