

VIDYA CHARCHA KENDRA
THE COMMUNITY PATHSHALA
SUPPLEMENTING SCHOOL EDUCATION UP TO CLASS V



Compendium Report 2019



Local Initiatives for Education—the Alternative
We learn and help our children learn

Goal

Regenerating self-sustained local initiatives in remote tribal/backward villages to provide to their children basic home education that converges to the mainstream school education.

Vision

Creating through the Vidya Charcha Kendras the opportunity and motivation for the local habitation to emphasise and take up basic education of their children as an integral part of their indigenous social culture as well as responsibility.

Mission

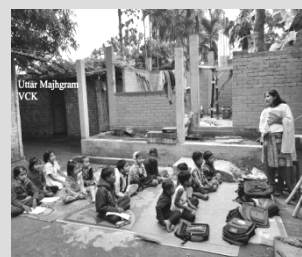
Initiating and establishing Vidya Charcha Kendras as the Community Pathshala of the villages for interactive learning of the children and their local instructors. The motto is — *We learn and help our children learn.*

Flag bearers of the movement

Housewives/girls of the villages with school education up to secondary/higher secondary will lead the mission in their respective villages as local instructors and such local instructors of nearby villages forming a team will spread the mission to adjacent villages, thus transforming the mission into a network of education movement.

Resources

Initiating and carrying out a BCK unit in the initial years require some bare minimum financial support which may be given directly to the beneficiaries as individual donations. In the longer run, once a BCK unit gets established as an integral part of the habitation and its culture, it may be made self-sustained through the local initiatives mobilising locally the resources/donations. Only suitable books/study material specifically developed for the mission and the necessary training to the instructors will be regularly provided for monitoring academic performance.



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Why Vidya Charcha Kendra — the Community Pathshala

Vidya Charcha Kendra, hereinafter called BCK—the village centre for basic education of children—is a concept and a mission, not any organization or institution. BCK is neither a conventional school, nor a private coaching centre, nor an alternative to the mainstream school education. It is a supplementary system of educating rural underprivileged children in backward and tribal areas through local initiatives. In view of the problem of high school drop outs, the Community Pathshala model of BCK focuses on supplementing the educational needs of the underprivileged children so as to enable them participate successfully in the mainstream formal education.

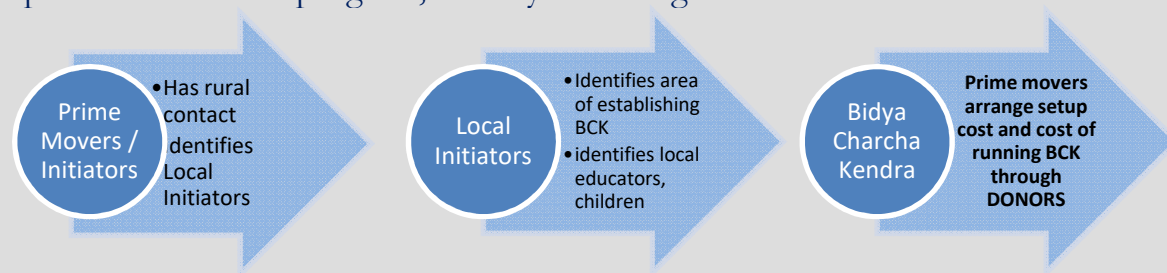
Unlike the formal schools, in BCK the foundation of learning of the children is laid by mother or aunt-like persons from the same village with some education (Madhyamik/Class X level). They are the local educators from among the homemakers or young girls of the village. They do not act like the teacher-instructor of the formal schools, but rather sit with the children and explain things in local vernacular with motherly care and help them learn through understanding and practising the lessons. This is the primary objective of BCK.

Foundation — Network of independent initiatives

The concept of the mission BCK is evolving a network of independent initiatives operating low cost BCK units especially in rural backward and tribal areas. The **initiator** of such unit/units will work independently following the Community Pathshala model of BCK using the study material and lesson plans. The initiator will supervise and monitor regularly the academic progress of the BCK unit either directly or through a **local initiator**.

The initiator or local initiator, as the case may be, identifies the village/villages and the local educator, preferably a housewife of the village with school level education (called **local educator** or barefoot educator). She will identify the children and meet their parents regularly to bring and educate their children in the BCK unit. She will hold the activity 6 days in a week for about two hours every day in or near her premises with 15–20 children. In this Community Pathshala model, physical infrastructures like, school building, benches, tables etc. are not needed for carrying out this basic education activity.

The initiator/local initiator finds the **donors** or **sponsors** who provide financial support for running the units. The local initiator keeps regular contact with the local educators, observes the progress of the unit, and report periodically to the sponsors about the progress, directly or through the initiator.



Finance — Donors, the backbone of BCK Network

The financial support required for setting-up one unit is about Rs.2500–3000/ as one-time expenditure for books, slate, chalk, pencils, mats, board etc. A monthly remuneration of Rs. 1000–1500/ to the local educator is remitted directly to their Bank Accounts or is sent through the local initiator in case the local educator does not have any bank account. The approach of BCK is direct donor–beneficiary (local educator) relationship, which assures the donor regarding the proper utilisation of the amount donated.

The parents of the wards are requested to contribute Rs. 20–25/for one child per month to the local educator that may be used for replenishing the consumables like exercise books, pencils, erasers etc. through local purchase. Any amount remaining out of this fund is used every month for providing some snacks to the children.

Two layers of BCK units — Supplementing education up to Class V

To supplement school education up to Class V, there are two units in a village in BCK model which run in parallel under two local educators as below and a child progresses to level P, after completing level N:

Level **N** : Pre-primary (Nursery) to Class I — age group as per school system, 3+ to 7

Level **P** : Class II to Class V — age group as per school system, 7+ to 11

Unlike formal schools, there is no factory method of batch processing of the whole group of children by academic year with a common schedule of lessons fixed for everyone. With 15 to maximum 20 students, the local educator gives personalised care to every child according to his/her speed of progress in lessons—none is held back and none is pushed up to adhere to a common schedule of batch processing. A child, as and when completes level N, progresses to the next unit (level P) for further learning. Noticeably, the maximum duration in each level is 4 years, which a child may complete much earlier depending upon his/her age and speed of learning.

Learning methods— lesson plans and study material

There are two methods of learning. The most frequently used is rote learning by thoughtless cramming into memory the textbook lessons. The other is learning by understanding and practice. BCK uses the second method. Following the standard curricula of school education, lesson plans and lesson-wise study materials have been developed. These are used by the children under the guidance of the local educators. These customised study materials are in small booklets, which are easy to handle by little kids, unlike the huge, voluminous school textbooks. Care has been taken to make these simple and specific in their approach and without any excess of confusing elaboration and colourful pictures. These contain lessons for the children’s learning and practice along with instructions and explanations for the local educators indicating what to teach and how to teach in stages.

Lekhaporaay Haathekhari – Stage 1 & 2

Pre-primary Foundation for Beginners

Lekhaporaay Haathekhari – Stage 3 & 4

Bengali, English, Maths for Class I

Anko Shekhar Haathekhari – Vol. I	Maths for Class II & III
Anko Shekhar Haathekhari – Vol. II	Maths for Class IV & V
Sahoj Kathopokathone Ingreji Shekha – Vol. I	English for Class II & III
Sahoj Kathopokathone Ingreji Shekha – Vol. II	English for Class IV & V
<u>Other books for upper classes</u>	
Anko Shekhar Haathekhari – Vol. III	Arithmetic up to Class VIII
Sahoj Kathopokathone Ingreji Shekha – Vol. III	English up to Class VIII
Ingreji Byakaron Riti	Glossary of English Grammar
Computer Chalano Shekha O Jana	Computer learning for Beginners

Use of Audio-visuals

For general awareness of the children up to Class V on subjects like Environment, covering the Solar System, Planet Earth, Climate, Weather, Life on Earth, Plants, Animals, Civilisations, etc. as well as on topics of General Science, audio-visual learning modules are developed and used by BCK units to supplement what is described in writing in the school textbooks.

Monitoring and performance assessment of BCK units

The unit initiator with the help of the local initiator regularly monitors the activities and academic progress of the BCK units. They frequently visit the BCK units and remain in regular contact with local educators over telephone. Many of the initiators of the BCK units are using social media and have formed WhatsApp groups with the local educators, local initiators, and donors of the units for reporting the unit activities and exchange of ideas. The local educators post at the end of every month the Attendance Sheet of the children, mentioning their age and the learning stages. A Model Attendance Sheet is given for the purpose.

The performance of the local educator of the unit is assessed after every six months by the initiator in terms of the academic progression of the children over time from one learning stage to the next, vis-à-vis their age and class in the school and the time taken to complete the stage. The strengths and weaknesses of each child are assessed after every six months by the local educator of the unit in terms of the tasks under each stage of learning. A Model Progress Assessment Sheet is given to the local educators for this purpose.

The local educators are also encouraged to hold task-based annual examination and on-the-spot evaluation by gradation, so that the children may overcome the fear of appearing in school examinations. A Model Examination Method and a Model of Evaluation by Grades are given to the local educators. Such examinations are conducted by the local educator of the unit preferably in presence of a team of two other local educators of adjacent units.

Interface training and workshops of local educators

Enabling the local educators academically is the most challenging part of BCK model of Community Pathshala. The local educators are to evolve as barefoot educators in the remote villages and make the dream— we learn and help our children learn—come true. To motivate and guide the local educators in this

direction frequent interface meetings and training workshops are organised with the local educators from several adjacent units as well from different districts.

With the local educators of Birbhum as the host, two interface meetings of the local educators from Bankura (5–6 April 2019) and Jhargram (25–26 April 2019) districts were held at Phuldanga.



Interface: Jhargram-Birbhum

The interface meetings motivated the local educators with the mission and vision of BCK. There was an exchange of experiences and opinions. It also focused the future planning and how the



Interface: Bankura-Birbhum

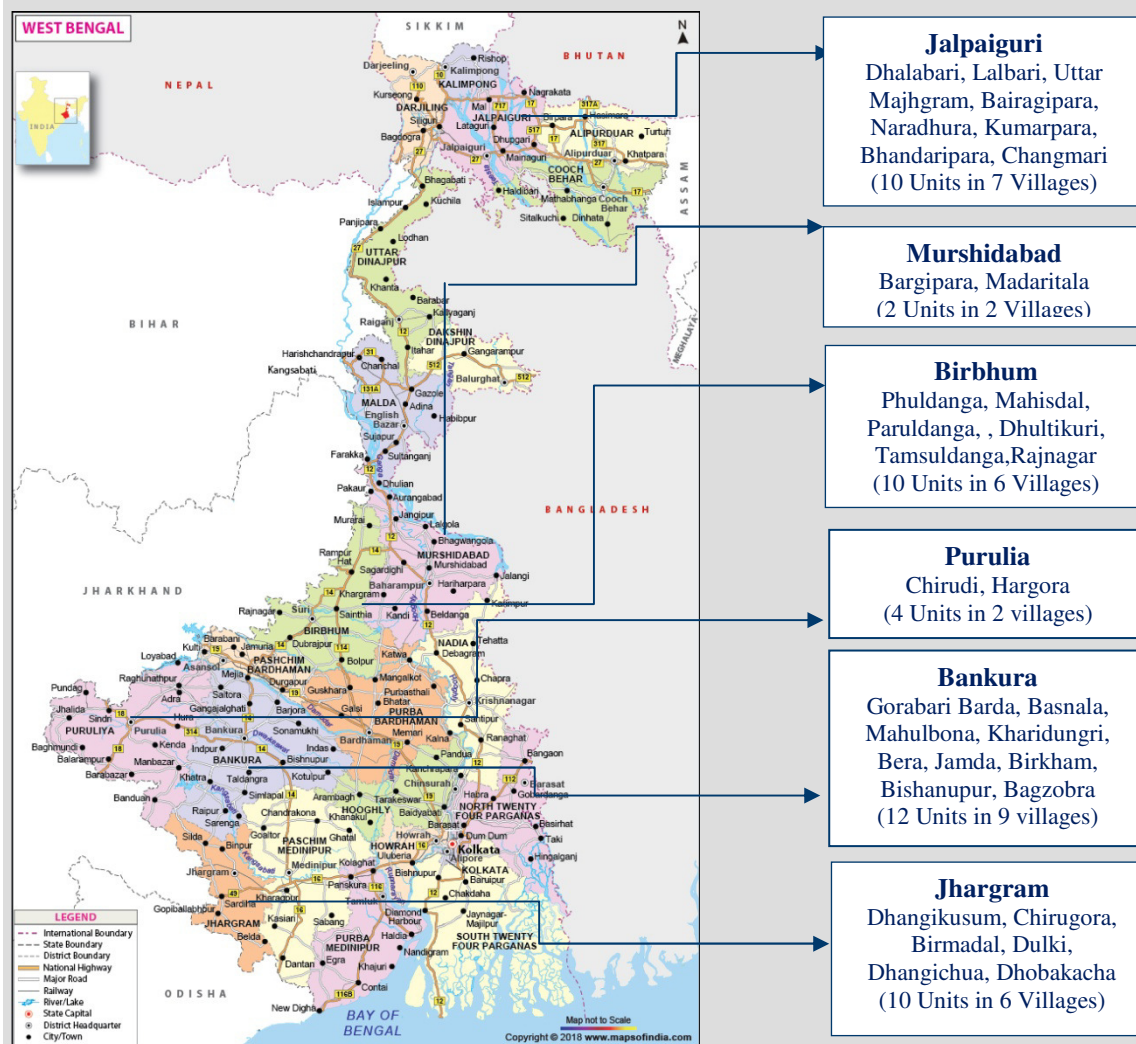
educators could look forward to an option of earning basic livelihood in future as educators of the village. The major part of the discussion was made in their common mother tongue, Santali.

In Jalpaiguri an interface meeting followed by a workshop of the local educators was held on 16 June 2019 at Dhalabari. The progress of the units was assessed and the study materials for initiating the Primary level were given to the educators who had almost completed the Pre-primary level. The educators were also shown how to evaluate the progress of the children.



Interface and workshop of local educators of Jalpaiguri

BCK Footprints as in December 2019



List of Vidya Charcha Kendra Units

48 Units catering to 845 Children as in December 2019
(Level N: Nursery to Class I, Level P: Class II to V)

Village	Level	Block/Gram Panchyat	Started on	No. of Children	Local Educator
BIRBHUM (10 units 162 children)					
1 Phuldanga	N	Ruppur	14-04-14	15	Lakshmi Soren
2 Phuldanga	P	Ruppur	14-04-14	10	Asha Murmu
3 Mahisdal	N	Mahisdal	01-11-17	22	Balika Murmu
4 Mahisdal	P	Mahisdal	01-11-17	18	Sukurmoni Murmu
5 Paruldanga	N	Uttarnarayanpur	01-11-17	18	Kalidasi Mardi
6 Paruldanga	P	Uttarnarayanpur	01-05-19	12	Rakshamoni Murmu
7 Tamsuldanga	N	Uttarnarayanpur	15-12-17	22	Santoshri Murmu
8 Tamsuldanga	P	Uttarnarayanpur	01-05-19	11	Jaba Kisku
9 Dhultikuri	N	Kankalitala	01-09-18	17	Maku Soren
10 Lauberia	N	Rajnagar	01-05-19	17	Keya Ghatwal
JALPAIGURI (10 units 182 children)					
1 Dhalabari	N	Rajdanga	01-01-18	17	Manjila Parbhina

2	Lalbari	N	Rajdanga	01-01-18	21	Bonani Chowdhury
3	Uttar Majhgram	N	Rajdanga	01-01-18	18	Khaleda Banu
4	Bargipara	N	Rajdanga	01-01-19	15	Lucky Begam
5	Naradhura I	N	Rajdanga	01-01-19	23	Minu Begam
6	Naradhura II	N	Rajdanga	01-03-19	20	Sabina Yesmin
7	Naradhura III	N	Rajdanga	01-03-19	20	Sangita Kheria
8	Bhandaripara	N	Kranti	01-01-19	15	Rita Adhikari
9	Kumarpara	N	Mal	01-01-19	12	Sahenaj Begam
10	Changmari	N	Mal	01-06-19	21	Rogina Banu
JHARGRAM (10 units 165 children)						
1	Dhangikusum Uporpara	N	Binpur II	22-06-18	17	Bina Singh
2	Dhangikusum Nichpara	N	Binpur II	22-06-18	16	Saraswati Patra
3	Dhangikusum Bonpara	N	Binpur II	22-06-18	16	Debasree Patra
4	Chirugora Purba	N	Binpur II	15-04-18	15	Alhadi Mandi
5	Chirugora Madhya	N	Binpur II	15-04-18	18	Sanchita Soren
6	Chirugora Dealerpara	N	Binpur II	15-04-18	16	Dipti Singh
7	Birmadal	N	Binpur II	10-06-18	17	Sarathi Singh
8.	Dulki	N	Binpur II	01-10-19	15	Sarmila Soren
9.	Dhangichua	N	Binpur II	01-10-19	17	Basanti Murmu (Baske)
10.	Dhobakacha	N	Binpur II	01-10-19	18	Sumitra Singh
BANKURA (12 units 235 children)						
1	Gorabari Barda (S)	N	Ranibadh	15-03-18	16	Purnima Soren
2	Gorabari Barda (N)	N	Ranibadh	15-03-18	17	Sefali Hembram
3	Mahulbona (W)	N	Ranibadh	22-04-18	16	Kalpana Soren
4	Mahulbona (E)	N	Ranibadh	22-04-18	18	Monica Hansda
5	Khuridungri	N	Ranibadh	22-04-18	16	Suparna Kisku
6	Banshnala	N	Khatra	15-04-19	15	Urmila Mandi
7.	Bera	N	Raipur	01-07-19	28	Ilabati Mahata
8.	Kalapathar	N	Raipur	31-12-19	16	Bhaktirani Bhuinya
9.	Jamda Bera	N	Ranibandh	01-10-19	35	Sarala Baske
10.	Birtham	N	Ranibandh	01-10-19	21	Sreemati Mahata
11.	Bishanupur	N	Raipur	01-10-19	19	Namita Mahata
12.	Bagzobra	N	Khatra	01-10-19	18	Sharmila Soren
PURULIA (4 units 65 children)						
1	Chirudih I	N	Bandowan	1-10-19	16	Singi Soren
2.	Chirudih II	N	Bandowan	1-10-19	16	Sagari Hansda
3.	Chirudih III	N	Bandowan	1-10-19	18	Suchitra Soren
4.	Hargara I	N	Bandowan	1-10-19	15	Mitali Murmu
Murshidabad (2 units 36 children)						
1	Madartala	N	Hariharpara	15-07-19	15	Samima Nasrin
2	Bagirapara	N	Nabagram	15-07-19	21	Asmani Khatun