

## Vidyacharcha Kendras in Jalpaiguri

### A Profile of the District

Jalpaiguri District, situated in the northern part of West Bengal, comprises mostly of rural areas. Nearly 80 percent of its population resides in rural areas. It has also a large percentage of backward class population. A sizeable population resides in Tea Gardens and Forest villages which are isolated and are accessible with much difficulty during the monsoon. Spread over an area of 3386.18 Sq. Kilometres, Jalpaiguri has 404 inhabited villages, of which 29 are forest villages. The district has 80 village Panchayats and 3 Municipalities. As per Census of 2011 it has a population of 23.81 lakh. The district got its name from 'Jalpai' which is the Bengali term of Olive that were once grew there and 'guri' means seat/place. Even in 1900 Jalpaiguri witnessed presence of many Olive trees. With change of time Olive of Jalpaiguri was replaced by cash crop like Tea. But now many tea gardens of the region have been facing survival problem since the crisis in Tea Industry in India and the mismatch between price and wage in the industry had been further plunging the labourers into poverty and thereby leading to eternal journey towards debt trap. Whereas in July 2018 the Government of West Bengal fixed the minimum wage at Rs. 244 to unskilled labourers in agriculture, the labourers in Tea Gardens get a daily wage of Rs. 176 only. Poverty affected life in rural areas compels the earning members of the families to curtail the expenditure on education, which cannot be a priority item in their meagre budget.

### The initiative in Jalpaiguri



Dhiman Das

In Jalpaiguri, there is an acute need for giving educational supports to the underprivileged children in the villages. Realising this need in this area, **Dhiman Das** explored the possibility of initiating Vidyacharcha Kendras here and the dream materialised with the financial help of common people and local guidance of the eminent social worker of the District, **Padmasree Karimul Hak. Sri Karimul Haque**, also known as Bike Ambulance Dada, is a renowned person of North Bengal as an eminent social worker. He is actively involved and has helped establishing and monitoring the Vidyacharcha Kendras in Jalpaiguri district.



Padmasree Karimul Hak

The journey of Vidyacharcha Kendra in Jalpaiguri started in January 2018 with units in four villages in Kranti Assembly Constituent area under Mal Subdivision and now in September 2019 the Community Pathshala model of Vidyacharcha Kendra has spread further in Jalpaiguri in total 10 units with the help of financial supports from the donors listed below.

### JALPAIGURI (10 units 182 children )

Village	Level	Block	Started on	No. of Children	Local Educator	Donor
1   Dhalabari	N	Rajdanga	01-01-18	17	Manjila Parbhina	Dr. Basujit Ganguly
2   Lalbari	N	Rajdanga	01-01-18	21	Bonani Chowdhury	Dr. Manas Kundu

3	Uttar Majhgram	N	Rajdanga	01-01-18	18	Khaleda Banu	Dr. Subhasish Mukherjee
4	Bargipara	N	Rajdanga	01-01-19	15	Lucky Begam	Dhiman Das
5	Naradhura I	N	Rajdanga	01-01-19	23	Minu Begam	S. Bhattacharya
6	Naradhura II	N	Rajdanga	01-03-19	20	Sabina Yesmin	S. Bhattacharya
7	Naradhura III	N	Rajdanga	01-03-19	20	Sangita Kheria	S. Bhattacharya
8	Bhandaripara	N	Kranti	01-01-19	15	Rita Adhikari	Dhiman Das
9	Kumarpara	N	Mal	01-01-19	12	Sahenaj Begam	S. Bhattacharya
10	Changmari	N	Mal	01-06-19	21	Rogina Banu	Dr. Manas Kundu

### Uttar Majhgram Vidyacharcha Kendra



Manjila Parbhina

Uttar Majhgram, under Rajdanga Village Panchayet, is situated 41.4 km away from the sub-district headquarter, Malbazar, and 30.3 km away from district headquarter Jalpaiguri. The geographical area of the village is 4.5 sq. kilometres.

Uttar Majhgram has a total population of 3,092 peoples and about 674 households. Uttar Majhgram VCK was established in Januray 2018 and is now running with 18 children. Manjila Parbhina is the local educator here.



### Dhalabari Vidyacharcha Kendra



Khaleda Banu

Dhalabari village under Rajdanga Village Panchayat is located in Mal Subdivision of Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal. It is situated 41km away from Malbazar and 31.5 km away from district headquarter Jalpaiguri. The total geographical area of the village is 4.54 sq. kilometres. Dhalabari has a total population of 3,676 and there are about 779 households. Established in January 2018, Dhalabari VCK is running presently with 17 children. Khaleda Banu is the local educator.



### Lalbari Vidyacharcha Kendra

Surrounded with tea plantations Lalbari village is adjacent to Dhalabari under Rajdanga Village Panchayat in Mal Subdivision of Jalpaiguri. The Vidyacharcha Kendra unit was established in Januray 2018 to cater the need of the local children. Now 21 children are enrolled at this VCK Unit and Banani Chowdhury is the local educator.



Banani Chowdhury



### Bairagipara (Kranti) Vidyacharcha Kendra



Lucky Begam

Bairagipara, a small settlement near Kranti Bazar, is no different from other villages of Jalpaiguri. The village is surrounded by agricultural land. This unit of Vidyacharcha Kendra has started in January 2019 with 15 Children and the pre-primary (nursery level) and Lucky Begam is the local educator here.

### Naradhura Vidyacharcha Kendra I, II, III



Minu Begam



Sabina Yesmin



Sangita Kheriya

Naradhura, is a small village in the tea garden areas under Rajdanga Village Panchayat in Mal Subdivision of Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal. The village has a large number of tribal populations. Poverty alongside unemployment has engulfed the village. There are three VCK units in this village catering to the educational needs of nearly 63 children. Initially the first unit started in January 2019, with 23 children and Minu Begam was the local educator. With number of students increasing, two more units were initiated with 20 students each in March 2019 (Naradhura II with Sabina Yesmin, and Naradhura III with Sangta Kheriya as local educators).



### Kumarpara VidyacharchaKendra



Sahenaj Begam

The area of Kumarpara Village is about 4 sq. Km. It is one of the big villages of Jalpaiguri. Its nearest town is Mal and the distance of Kumarpara village to Mal is approximately 12 km. The village is home to 3823 people, among them 1949 (51%) are male and 1874 (49%) are female. Sahenaj Begam is the local educator of the VCK unit here. Established in January 2019, the VCK presently caters to 12 students at the pre-primary (nursery level).

### Bhandaripara (Kranti)



Rita Adhikari

Kranti is the 9th most populous village of Jalpaiguri. It is located in Mal subdivision of the district. The geographical area of Kranti village is 7 sq. km. and the nearest town is Mal. The distance of Kranti from Mal is 36 km. Rita Adhikari is the local educator of the VCK unit in



Bhandaripara of the village Kranti. Established in January 2019, the VCK presently caters to 15 students at the pre-primary (nursery level).

### Academic Interactions and Interface with Local Educators

Since the beginning of the Vidyacharcha Kendras in some villages in Rajdanga, Kranti, and Mal blocks in Jalpaiguri, Dhiman Das regularly visited the units, interacted with the local educators and organised interface meetings with them for academic capacity building. Karimul Hak, in spite of his busy schedule, kept watch over the everyday working and progress of the units.

In March 2018, Dhiman Das with Sutanu Bhattacharya visited each of the units to help the local educators understand the curricula and the lessons in the study material developed of Vidyacharcha Kendra.



In June 2019 an Interface Meeting and Workshop was held, which was attended by all the local educators, including those from the new units that were initiated during the year.





Next, a daylong Interface Meeting with all the local educators was held in March 2020 under the auspices of **Vidyacharcha Shiksha Parisheba**, a registered organisation incorporated under Karimul Hak Manobseba Sadan Society (Dhalabari, Rajdanga, Jalpaiguri). Extensive threadbare discussions were held and the local educators were trained on various academic aspects, beside performance appraisal of the units and book distributions.



In this meeting it was decided that as Vidyacharcha Shiksha Parisheba (Karimul Hak Manobseba Sadan Society) had evolved as a local initiative, the goal of Vidyacharcha Kendra had been achieved. Henceforth these Vidyacharcha units would be managed and run by Vidyacharcha Shiksha Parisheba and academic supports as needed by them would be provided.