

## Activity of Jangal Mahal Bidyacharcha Kendras 2019

### Jangal Mahal—A Profile

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century the portion of Bengal extending from the hill areas of Birbhum to Ranchi was loosely known as Jangal Mahal. In 1805 various parganas (23 in number) and mahals together formed one administrative unit named as the District of Jangal Mahal. It was dissolved in 1833 by an administrative decision to cope with the disturbances of the Bhumijes, and split into several neighbouring districts.

Percentage of population, 2011		
Region	SC	ST
India	16.2	8.2
West Bengal	23.5	6.0
Jungle Mahal	22.0	15.0

The tract along the western boarder of West Bengal is now popularly known as Jangal Mahal, covering three districts of West Bengal, namely Bankura, Purulia, and Jhargram. The region, still covered with remains of the forest, was the home of the

District	Overall literacy rate		ST literacy rate	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Bankura	80.05	60.05	72.90	46.01
Purulia	78.00	50.50	67.84	39.77
Jhargram	71.76	58.13	NA	NA

nomadic tribes, who lived on Jangal produces and the spoils of the chase. Among them were the Savaras, a powerful race that can be traced as far as the Aitareya Brahmana. The characteristic features of Jangal Mahal region are its forests, laterite soil, the climate, and especially the tribal character of its demography.

As per Census 2011, the gaps in literacy in Jangal Mahal are significantly high with the tribal population lagging behind. Lives in Jangal Mahal also reveal a poor picture with a large percentage of marginal workers compared to that of West Bengal average. This gap is also more pronounced among the females.

Marginal Workers (percentage)		
Region	Male	Female
Bankura	18.1	63.2
Purulia	26.6	67.4
West Bengal	12.7	51.0

### The BCK Initiative in Jangal Mahal

After visiting the first two Bidya Charcha Kendra (BCK) units at Phuldanga, Ruppur, Birbhum in September 2017, **Debatra Dey** explored across the districts of Jangal Mahal to assess the need and potentiality of BCK units in the area. Through several visits to the remote villages of Jangal Mahal, inhabited mostly by tribal people, he discussed with the guardians, especially the mothers, regarding the status of pre-primary and primary education of their children. Within a few months' preparation the first BCK units in Jangal Mahal were initiated in March-April, 2018 — 3 in Chirugora village of Belpahari in Jhargram, and 2 in Barda Gorabari village in Bankura.

Since then, BCK units has started to spread in several other villages in Jangal Mahal—in Binpur block of Jhargram, in Ranibadh, Khatra and Raipur blocks of Bankura, known as the district with the highest proportion of tribal population.

Recently the wave of initiating BCK has reached the Bandowan block in Purulia, evolving the BCK initiative as an education movement.



Debatra Dey



Amrita Chowdhury



Anirban Mukherjee



Dibyendu Bhattacharya

At the early stage of this initiative, **Amrita Chowdhury, Anirban Mukherjee** and **Dibyendu Bhattacharya** joined as initiators with Debatra Dey and thus evolved the **Jangal Mahal Team of BCK**.

From its inception, the BCK initiative in Jangal Mahal has got the support from **Sunil Soren** as the local initiator. Sunil Soren, a person from a marginalised background, lives in Chirugora in Belpahari, very near to Kakrajhore and Amlasole. He has been working tirelessly in Jangal Mahal with the mission of BCK and has initiated one unit at his own home. He has been successful in spreading BCK in Jhargram and Purulia. He oversees all the units across districts with his unending zeal and spirit.



Sunil Soren

### Donors/Sponsor's Support

From the formative stage several donors have eagerly come forward to extend financial helps in establishing and operating BCK units. Their names include:

- **Dr. Santanu Dasgupta** (Senior Vice Chairman, RIL)
- **Ms. Torril Stockland** (Sweden)
- **Dr. Prantik Das** (Consultant Clinical Oncologist, NHS, UK)
- **Dr. Sourav Das** (Australia National University)
- **Dr. Malancha Naha** (RBC College, Morning)
- **Dr. Bhaskar Bhaduri** (Mumbai)
- **Mr. Arun Kumar Agarwala** (Agarwala Stores, Kanchrapara)
- **Professor Arun Kanti Saha**
- **Dr. Sushmita Banerjee** (Associate Professor, Charuchandra College)
- **Sri Amarendra Sarkar** (Barrackpore)
- **Smt. Gita Sinha** (Siliguri)

Besides the donors sponsoring one or more units, many other donors have given supports as and when required in cash and kind to provide books, blackboards, exercise books, pencils, drawing books, printing of study material etc.

### The BCK Units in Jangal Mahal

(26 units catering to 465 children as in Dec 2019)

JHARGRAM (10 units catering to 165 children)						
	Village	Block	Inception	No. of Children	Local Educator	Donor
1.	Dhangikusum (U)	Binpur II	22-06-18	17	Bina Singh	Mr. Arun Kanti Saha
2.	Dhangikusum (N)	Binpur II	22-06-18	16	Pabita Singh	Mr. Arun Kanti Saha
3.	Dhangikusum (B)	Binpur II	22-06-18	16	Debasree Patra	Mr. Arun Kumar Agarwala
4.	Chirugora (P)	Binpur II	15-04-18	15	Alhadi Mandi	Dr. Santanu Dasgupta
5.	Chirugora (M)	Binpur II	15-04-18	18	Sanchita Soren	Dr. Santanu Dasgupta
6.	Chirugora (D)	Binpur II	15-04-18	16	Dipti Singh	Dr. Bhaskar Bhaduri
7.	Birmadal	Binpur II	10-06-18	17	Sarathi Singh	Mr. Arun Kumar Agarwal

8.	Dulki	Binpur II	01.10.19	15	Sharmila Soren	Ms. Amrita Chowdhury Ghosh
9.	Dhangichua	Binpur II	01.10.19	17	Basanti Murmu	Ms. Amrita Chowdhury Ghosh
10.	Dhobakacha	Binpur II	01.10.19	18	Sumitra Singh	Ms. Amrita Chowdhuri Ghosh
<b>BANKURA (12 units catering to 235 children)</b>						
1.	Gorabari Barda (S)	Ranibadh	15-03-18	16	Purnima Soren	Smt. Gita Sinha
2.	Gorabari Barda (N)	Ranibadh	15-03-18	17	Sefali Hembram	Smt. Gita Sinha
3.	Mahulbona (W)	Ranibadh	22-04-18	16	Kalpana Soren	Dr.Sourav Das
4.	Mahulbona (E)	Ranibadh	22-04-18	18	Monica Hansda	Torill Stokland
5.	Khuridungri	Ranibadh	22-04-18	16	Suparna Kisku	Mr. Amarendra Sarkar
6.	Banshnala	Khatra	15-04-19	15	Urmila Mandi	Mr. Amarendra Sarkar
7.	Bera	Raipur	01-07-19	28	Ilabati Mahata	Dr. Prantik Das
8.	Kalapathar	Raipur	01-12-19	16	Vaktirani Bhuinya	
9.	Jamda Bera	Ranibandh	01-10-19	35	Sarala Baske	Dr. Prantik Das
10.	Birtham	Ranibandh	01-10-19	21	Sreemati Mahata	
11.	Bishanupur	Raipur	01-10-19	19	Namita Mahata	
12.	Bagzobra	Khatra	01-10-19	18	Sharmila Soren	
<b>PURULIA (4 units catering to 65 children)</b>						
1.	Chirudih	Bandowan	01-10-19	16	Singi Soren	Smt. Malancha Naha
2.	Chirudih	Bandowan	01-10-19	16	Sagari Hansda	Smt. Malancha Naha
3.	Chirudih	Bandowan	01-10-19	18	Suchitra Soren	Dr. Sushmita Banerjee
4.	Hargara	Bandowan	01-10-19	15	Mitali Murmu	Dr. Sushmita Banerjee

## The Local Educators in Jangal Mahal Jhargram

In Jhargram the BCK units are initiated in Belpahari area under Binpur-II block, which is almost 50 Km. away from Jhargram town. It is the one of the most backward block of West Bengal in terms of any human development indicators. The units are located in tribal villages surrounded by forest.



Sanchita Soren  
Chirugora Madhyapara  
Jhargram



Dipti Singh  
Chirugora Dealerpara  
Jhargram



Alhadi Mundi  
Chirugora Purbapara  
Jhargram



Debasree Patra  
Dhangikusum Bonpara  
Jhargram



Pabita Singh  
Dhangikusum Namopara  
Jhargram



Bina Singh  
Dhangikusum Uparpara  
Jhargram



Sarathi Singh  
Birmadal  
Jhargram



Sumitra Singh  
Dhobakacha  
Jhargram



Sharmila Soren  
Dulki  
Jhargram



Basanti Murmu (Baske)  
Dhangichua  
Jhargram

### Bankura

In Bankura BCK initiative has been started in Khatra, Ranibandh and Raipir blocks, known for their high tribal population coupled with multidimensional deprivations. Beside the tribal families children also come from *mulbasi* background. The demand for establishing BCK units is now coming from many adjacent villages of the existing units.



Purnima Soren  
Gorabari, Barda(S)  
Bankura



Sefali Hembram  
Gorabari, Barda(N)  
Bankura



Kalpana Soren  
Mahulboni (W)  
Bankura



Manika Hansda  
Mahulboni (E)  
Bankura



Suparna Kisku  
Khuridungri  
Bankura



Urmila Mundi  
Bansnala  
Bankura



Ilaboti Mahata  
Bera  
Bankura



Bhaktirani Bhuinya  
Kalapathar  
Bankura



Sarala Baske  
Jamdabera  
Bankura



Sreemati Mahata  
Birkham  
Bankura



Namita Mahata  
Bishnupur  
Bankura



Sharmila Soren  
Bagzobra  
Bankura

### Purulia

Bandowan is one of the most backward blocks in Purulia inhabited by various tribal communities along with other communities almost from similar socio

economic background. It is one of the poorest blocks in the whole state. We have started our activities in Chirudih G.P. of the block in October 2019.



Singi Soren  
Chirudih (N)  
Purulia



Sagari Hansda  
Chirudih (E)  
Purulia



Suchitra Soren  
Chirudih (W)  
Purulia



Mitali Murmu  
Hargora (N)  
Purulia

## Academic Activities





## Capacity Building Workshops and Interface Meetings





## Social and Cultural Activities

Apart from teaching and learning, the BCK units in Jangal Mahal are also involved in other social and cultural activities.

### Hool Dibas

The day 30<sup>th</sup> June, 1855, is marked as the Hool dibas. On this day, two years before the *Sepahy Mutiny*, the Adivasis in Chhotonagpur plateau revolted against the British colonial regime under the leadership of four brothers, Sidhoo, Kanhoo, Chand and Vairab. In the memory of this historic event the BCK Units in Jangal Mahal observed Hool Dibas on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018 with much enthusiasm and spirit. Children presented songs and dances under the guidance of their *Didimannies*, followed by a *kichuri* lunch at the end.



### Sports

In the winter of 2018 sports were organized separately in Bankura and Jhargram. *Didimannies* took the initiations to purchase prizes from the local market. Fields were also prepared by them before the day of sports. All the children had participated in both the districts. Apart from delivering all responsibilities *Didimannies* themselves arranged for lunch for all the children and local people extended support to make it success.





### Donation for flood relief in Kerala

The educators and the children of the BCK units in Jangal Mahal took self motivated initiatives to collect money to extend their help to the victims of the devastating flood in Kerala in 2018. They collected money from their villages and handed over their collection to the Kolkata representatives of Kairali Samaj, who came themselves travelling all the way from Kolkata to Belpahari to receive the money.



### Plantation

In association with Light House, a Kolkata based NGO in the first week of August 2019 around 300 seedlings of various fruits were distributed to the children of BCK units in Bankura and Jhargram.



Every child had been given the responsibility of caring one seedling. It is revealed in a visit after six months that almost 90 percent seedlings have survived with expected growth.

### Distribution of Winter Clothing

Alongside these activities in winters of 2018 and 2019 winter clothing and blankets were distributed among the children with the help of our friends.