

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

“Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice.”

— Nelson Mandela



**SABUJ
SANGHA**

SBI Gram Seva Program Brings Holistic Development to Rural Nadia

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The SBI Gram Seva Program, implemented in Nadia district in collaboration with local Gram Panchayats, is emerging as a transformative model of rural development. Covering the villages of Kumarpur, Atalia, Narapatipara, Rameswarpur, and Harishpur, the initiative—launched on October 2, 2022—has already reached over 23,500 villagers with focused interventions in education, healthcare, livelihoods, digital inclusion, women’s empowerment, and environmental sustainability.

The Atalia Resource Centre stands at the core of the program, functioning as a multi-utility development hub for the community. The centre offers an open gym that is now regularly used by more than 70 local youths, promoting physical fitness and healthy lifestyles. The Digital Seva Kendra and computer facilities are helping villagers access essential digital services and learn basic computer skills. A tailoring unit has been set up to train women and youth, providing them with income-generation opportunities. The Water Treatment Plant at the centre is supplying safe drinking water to 1,278 households, addressing long-standing concerns about water quality in the region. In addition, eco-friendly demonstration units—such as rainwater harvesting models and waste management solutions—are inspiring villagers to adopt sustainable practices in their daily lives.

Education has received a major boost with the introduction of a digital smart classroom, the creation of a library and computer lab, and the provision of remedial coaching for academically weak students. More than 1,160 students are now benefiting from a more interactive and technology-enabled learning environment. Scholarships under the SBI OJAS scheme have further supported deserving students from low-income families, enabling them to continue their education without financial burden.

Healthcare services have also expanded significantly under the program. A total of 181 Sanjeevani Clinics have been conducted, reaching 3,815 beneficiaries with essential primary healthcare. Regular awareness sessions on hygiene, nutrition, maternal health, anemia prevention, and lifestyle diseases have helped community members adopt healthier practices. These camps are playing a crucial role in bridging healthcare gaps in remote areas where medical facilities are limited.

Women’s empowerment remains a key pillar of the Gram Seva Program. Forty-three self-help groups (SHGs) are now active across the five villages, supporting 112 women entrepreneurs engaged in small businesses such as tailoring, handicrafts, food processing, and livestock rearing. Capacity-building workshops and exposure visits have strengthened leadership among rural women, encouraging them to participate actively in community development.

Efforts in agriculture and environmental conservation have helped strengthen local livelihoods and ecological balance. The program has introduced modern farming practices, promoted organic cultivation through vermicompost pits, installed solar streetlights in key public areas, rejuvenated village ponds, and encouraged tree plantation drives. These measures are improving productivity, enhancing resilience to climate challenges, and creating a cleaner rural environment.

A defining feature of the initiative is the increasing role of Gram Seva Committees, which are being entrusted with the management of assets, activities, and community resources. This transition is helping to ensure local ownership, accountability, and the long-term sustainability of the program’s impact. With its integrated approach and strong community participation, the SBI Gram Seva Program is steadily transforming villages in Nadia, setting a promising example of how collaborative rural development can uplift lives and build resilient, self-reliant communities in West Bengal.



Empowering Rural Women Entrepreneurs in Murshidabad through Skill and Exposure



In Murshidabad, the quiet determination of women entrepreneurs is shaping a new story of empowerment and economic independence. From 4th to 6th November 2025, the district buzzed with renewed energy as Mr. Kiran Kadam, Chief Manager – CSR and Sustainability, visited the project area to review the progress of the Digital Sakhi Project and connect with the women whose lives have been transformed through it.

The visit began on November 4th with a group mentoring session for Women Entrepreneurs engaged in fisheries, poultry, and animal husbandry. The session was led by Dr. Debtanu Burman, Founder of Aqua Doctor Solutions Pvt. Ltd., who shared practical insights on improving product quality and marketing their produce effectively. For many of these women, the discussion opened new perspectives on how small rural businesses can grow with the right knowledge and confidence.

The following day brought an exciting opportunity for hands-on learning. On 5th November, twenty Women Entrepreneurs visited a readymade garment factory in Reginagar, Beldanga, where they interacted with Mr. Alauddin Sk, a local entrepreneur who built his enterprise from scratch. Watching the factory operations, understanding supply chains, and hearing Mr. Sk’s journey from struggle to success left the women deeply inspired. They returned with fresh ideas – and renewed belief that their own ventures could expand and thrive too.

The visit reflected the collective commitment of all those working to empower women at the grassroots. Special thanks were extended to Mr. Soumitra Dutta (Business Head, Rupa), Dr. Debtanu Burman (Founder, Aqua Doctor Solutions Pvt. Ltd.), and trainers Mr. Sourav Saha and Mr. Subroto Ghosh from NIFT and ATDC for their constant guidance and support.

As the sessions concluded, one message stood clear – when knowledge meets opportunity, transformation follows. The Digital Sakhi Project continues to nurture that change in Murshidabad, helping women turn skills into livelihoods, dreams into enterprises, and self-belief into lasting empowerment.

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Children's Day Celebrated with Enthusiasm at Kishalaya Sishu Siksha Niketan

Kishalaya Sishu Siksha Niketan observed Children's Day with great enthusiasm, placing the spotlight firmly on its young learners. This year's celebration stood out for a special reason—the entire program was anchored and conducted by the students themselves. The event highlighted the school's commitment to fostering confidence and leadership in its students. From hosting segments to coordinating performances, students took full responsibility, demonstrating remarkable creativity and self-assurance. Teachers and parents present at the event expressed appreciation for the initiative, noting that such opportunities encourage children to think independently and build essential life skills.



The school teachers emphasised that children are the nation's future, and their holistic development—spanning academic, social, emotional, and creative growth—is essential for building a strong and progressive society. By allowing students to lead the program, the institution reinforced its belief that children flourish when trusted with responsibility. The celebration concluded with cultural performances, group activities, and interactions that reflected the vibrant spirit of the young participants. The school reiterated its commitment to creating an environment where every child is encouraged to dream, explore, and grow.

Nayantara: Building Leaders Among Rural Adolescent Girls

The Sundarbans, with its rich mangroves, rivers, and wildlife, is often described as a land of natural beauty. Yet, beneath this picture of abundance lies the harsh reality of deprivation. For generations, the people of this region in South 24 Parganas, West Bengal, have lived under the constant threat of cyclones, floods, tidal surges, and breached embankments. Poverty, mono-crop agriculture, and lack of opportunities force many to migrate to cities as wage labourers, leaving behind children who grow up deprived of parental care, education, and protection. For girls, the struggle is even harder. Low literacy rates, entrenched gender norms, and the prevalence of child marriage deny them dignity and opportunity. Many are pushed into marriage at an early age, leading to pre-mature motherhood, poor health, and a cycle of poverty that continues through generations.



Vulnerable girls are also at risk of trafficking and exploitation, leaving their futures uncertain and fragile. It was against this backdrop that the Nayantara Program was launched in 2017 in Nandakumarpur village. What began with just 18 adolescent girls has now grown into a powerful movement of more than 750 girls across South 24 Parganas and Purba Medinipur. The program's mission is clear: stop early marriages, ensure girls complete at least Class XII, and empower them with skills for financial independence. The girls, organized into Kishori Bahini groups of 10-12 members, meet every month to deliberate on issues such as child marriage, trafficking, gender discrimination, and disaster preparedness. But they don't stop at discussion—they take their learning into the community, raising awareness, counselling families, and standing up for the rights of vulnerable girls. Each group also manages a savings fund to support those at risk of dropping out of school, ensuring that education continues even in times of financial crisis.

Beyond academics, Nayantara nurtures confidence and creativity. Football training, spoken English, art, craft, and drama classes help the girls explore their talents, gain self-esteem, and build leadership skills. Over time, quiet adolescents have transformed into confident voices, capable of challenging injustice and inspiring change. "Through Nayantara, we are learning to dream big and work together to protect our rights," said one member proudly, her words echoing the spirit of hundreds of girls who are determined to build a better future.

From the narrow village lanes of Nandakumarpur, Naranpur, and Mahabatnagar, the voices of Nayantara girls are carrying far and wide. With every meeting held, every awareness play staged, and every football kicked across the field, these young leaders are proving that when rural girls are given opportunity, they do not just transform their own futures—they uplift entire communities.

Strengthening Eye Care Services in the Sundarbans

In a significant step toward improving community healthcare in the remote Sundarbans region, Dr Monika Landesz, an eye surgeon associated with PUM Netherlands, undertook an extensive visit to Sabuj Sangha's eye care facilities across South 24 Parganas. Her visit aimed to observe, assess, and strengthen the organisation's ongoing efforts in delivering accessible eye care to underserved populations. During her visit, Dr Landesz toured the Swarnalata Sabuj Seva Sadan at Nandakumarpur and the Vision Centres located at Sagar and Herambagopalpur. She reviewed the service delivery mechanisms, interacted with healthcare staff, and offered professional guidance to enhance the effectiveness of the programs.



Her recommendations focused on improving accessibility, refining service quality, and widening the reach of eye care interventions for vulnerable communities in the region. A notable moment during the visit occurred at the Sagar Vision Centre, where Mr Bankim Chandra Hazra, Minister of Sundarban Affairs, underwent an eye check-up. His participation highlighted the growing awareness and importance of preventive eye care across the region.

Sabuj Sangha's eye care initiatives, supported by multiple national and international partners, continue to play a vital role in bridging healthcare gaps in one of India's most geographically challenging landscapes. Dr. Landesz's visit further reinforced the commitment to delivering quality eye health services and ensuring that more residents of the Sundarbans gain access to timely diagnosis and treatment.