

CHAMPA MAHILA SOCIETY

Site Visit Report

Visit Date – 11.05.2025

Surendra Smriti Bidyaniketan (SSB) & Sarada Balika Bidyamandir (SBB)

Introduction

A site visit was conducted to review the progress and impact of Surendra Smriti Bidyaniketan (SSB) at Bali Island, Gosaba, and Sarada Balika Bidyamandir (SBB) at Basanti, Sundarban, West Bengal. Both schools continue to serve marginalized, drop-out, backward, child labor, and non-school-going children, providing them with educational opportunities and holistic development.

The schools operate under the broader initiatives of Champa Mahila Society (CMS), which include Prakritir Pathshala (Nature School), Taruntirtha youth activities, care for destitute children, support for elderly people, self-help groups, plantation programs, support for widows from tiger-victim families, health camps, and promotion of organic agriculture.

Current Educational Context in West Bengal

The education system in rural West Bengal continues to face serious challenges, including:

- Acute shortage of teachers in government schools
- Closure of primary schools due to declining enrollment
- Lack of recruitment of teaching and non-teaching staff in govt. schools
- Reduced confidence among parents in public education
- Growing privatization and commercialization of education

As a result, many economically disadvantaged families are unable to access quality education. SSB and SBB have emerged as important educational alternatives, attracting increasing numbers of vulnerable children from surrounding communities.

General Observations

The schools continue to function effectively despite challenging socio-economic and geographical conditions. Students who were previously deprived of educational opportunities are now actively engaged in learning and personal development.

Improvements noted:

- Classroom participation
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Responsibility and self-discipline
- Social and cultural awareness

Teachers maintain close relationships with students and guardians, ensuring continuous monitoring of attendance, academic progress, and personal well-being.

Surendra Smriti Bidyaniketan (SSB)



School Profile

Established in 2004 with support from Asha for Education, SSB is located on Bali Island in the Sundarban region. The school serves drop-out, backward, child labor, and non-school-going children.

Teaching and Learning

Teachers employ child-centered teaching methods using:

- Charts and posters
- Maps and pictures
- Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs)
- Student-created educational resources
- Digital learning through tablets (TABs)

Students actively participate through questioning, discussion, and experiential learning approaches.

Digital Education and Library

- Four computers are available for student training.
- Students receive basic computer education.
- A library containing over 200 books has been established.
- Students regularly access literature including poetry, stories, biographies, and novels.

Nature-Based Learning

The school places strong emphasis on environmental education.

Activities included:

- Field visits to riverside and mangrove ecosystems.
- Observation of local biodiversity and livelihoods.
- Learning about mangrove species and environmental conservation.

These activities help students connect classroom learning with real-world environmental issues.

Co-Curricular Activities

Weekly study circles encourage:

- Storytelling
- Recitation
- Drawing
- Quiz competitions
- Reading about national leaders

A wall magazine was published showcasing students' poems, essays, travel stories, and creative writing.

Academic Monitoring

Three evaluation cycles were conducted during the year. Students requiring additional support were identified and provided remedial education. New academic sessions began promptly with distribution of books and educational materials.

Community and Student Development

Students participated in:

- National celebrations
- Environmental awareness programs
- Plantation drives
- Cultural programs
- Sports activities
- Annual training camps

Sixty-five students attended the annual camp at Goberdanga, receiving leadership, physical training, and cultural exposure.

Outcomes

- Improved attendance
- Reduced risk of school drop-out
- Enhanced confidence and leadership
- Better academic performance
- Increased environmental awareness
- Continued transition of Class X students to higher secondary education



Sarada Balika Bidyamandir (SBB)



School Profile

Established in 1994 with only 17 drop-out girls, SBB has become a significant institution for girls' education in the Basanti region.

Historically, the community faced:

- High drop-out rates
- Early marriage
- Vulnerability to trafficking

The school has played a major role in reducing these issues.

Teaching Methodology

Teachers use:

- Charts and posters
- Student-made TLMs
- Maps
- Digital tablets
- Interactive classroom activities

Students develop both academic and practical skills through participatory learning methods.

Digital Learning and Library

- Two computers are available for training.
- More than 300 books are available in the library.
- Students receive structured computer education.
- Selected students attended computer training programs at IBM Kolkata and received certificates and awards.

Co-Curricular and Cultural Activities

Students celebrated:

- Rabindra Jayanti
- Nazrul Jayanti
- Independence Day
- Teachers' Day
- Republic Day
- International Women's Day
- Saraswati Puja
- Basanta Utsav

Programs included rallies, cultural performances, plantation drives, poster writing, speeches, and awareness campaigns.

Leadership and Youth Development

Eighty girls participated in the annual Taruntirtha camp, where they received training in:

- Parade and drill
- Bratachari
- Folk dance
- Karate
- Gymnastics

- Drama
- Public speaking

Students earned prizes and certificates in various competitions.

Sports and Community Engagement

The annual sports event witnessed active participation by students and mothers. Guardian meetings were conducted regularly to discuss academic progress, health, hygiene, and social concerns. Teachers also conducted home visits and counseling sessions to support vulnerable students and families.

Entrepreneurship and Life Skills

Interactive sessions guided by mentors introduced students to:

- Small business concepts
- Sales and entrepreneurship
- Civic responsibility
- Financial awareness

Students demonstrated growing confidence, curiosity, and practical understanding of future livelihood opportunities.

Outcomes

- Significant reduction in drop-out rates
- Elimination of early marriage cases among enrolled students
- Prevention of trafficking risks
- Improved academic performance
- Increased self-confidence and leadership among girls
- Greater participation in higher education pathways



Community Impact (Overall)

Both schools have become important educational and social institutions within the Sundarban region.

Their collective impact includes:

- Educational inclusion of marginalized children
- Increased school retention
- Reduction in child labor and early marriage
- Improved community awareness
- Enhanced environmental consciousness
- Greater participation of parents in children's education
- Strengthened support networks through community involvement

Guardians, self-help groups, local communities, and CMS volunteers continue to provide valuable support.

Challenges

Despite positive outcomes, several challenges remain:

- Rising fuel and food costs affecting mid-day meal programs
- Increasing operational expenses
- Growing demand for admissions from vulnerable families
- Continued educational deprivation in surrounding communities
- Need for expanded digital and educational resources

Conclusion

The site visit confirms that both Surendra Smriti Bidyaniketan and Sarada Balika Bidyamandir continue to deliver meaningful educational and social impact among some of the most vulnerable children in the Sundarban region. The schools provide not only academic support but also holistic development, life skills, environmental awareness, and social protection.

The continued support of Asha for Education remains critical to sustaining these initiatives. Given the increasing demand for quality education among disadvantaged children and the

rising operational costs, ongoing financial and institutional support will be essential to maintain and expand the positive outcomes achieved by both schools. Continued support and consideration of enhanced funding to address increasing operational costs and growing community demand.

SSB Success Story Summary: Sayan Mondal



Sayan Mondal, the son of a small farmer, faced significant challenges during his childhood. He was irregular in school, often skipped classes, and eventually dropped out after Class IV. He even ran away from home and was rescued after four months. Concerned about his future, his father admitted him to SSB, where teachers provided special care, counseling, and guidance.

With continuous support from the school and his family, Sayan gradually became regular in attendance and developed an interest in studies. Over the years, he showed remarkable improvement in both academics and extracurricular activities. He performed well in English and Mathematics, received computer training, won several prizes in quiz competitions, and earned a scholarship through his excellent performance in a scholarship examination.

Now a Class IX student, Sayan is disciplined, hardworking, and valued by his teachers. His journey from a school dropout to a scholarship holder is an inspiring example of how proper guidance and determination can transform a child's life. He aspires to pursue Science after passing the Madhyamik Examination.

SBB Success Story Summary: Fatema Shekh



Fatema Shekh comes from an extremely poor family in Shibganj Colony village. Her father, Kucho Shekh, is elderly and suffers from several illnesses, making him unable to work. Her mother, Anoara Shekh, works as a domestic helper to support the family. Due to severe poverty, Fatema had to discontinue her education after Class III and began working as a child labourer alongside her mother.

Recognizing her potential, SBB counseled Fatema and her parents about the importance of education. The school provided encouragement, support, and confidence to the family, helping Fatema re-enroll in Class IV. Special remedial classes were arranged to help her overcome learning gaps and adjust to school life.

With continuous support from SBB and Champa Mahila Society, Fatema gradually developed a strong interest in education. She now attends school regularly and studies with dedication. Bengali is her favorite subject, and she enjoys drawing. Although she comes from a conservative family, she has developed a passion for dancing and performs very well.

Currently studying in Class V, Fatema has gained confidence, discovered new opportunities, and developed aspirations for the future. Her dream is to become a teacher and inspire other children through education.