

# **ANNUAL REPORT OF INSTITUTE FOR MOTIVATING SELF-EMPLOYMENT (IMSE) on its various activities in the year 2018-2019**

The Institute for Motivating Self Employment (IMSE) started its journey in 1973, being founded by a group of progressive youths, led by Late Mr. Biplab Halim.

Since its inception, IMSE has been trying to organise those living on the margins of society and create awareness among them so that they can raise a collective voice for a better society, free from exploitation.

In the past few decades, the organisation has been able to extend help to more than a million people with its activities. However, the journey has been an arduous one for IMSE which has faced various impediments and had to weather many-a-storm during its long journey.

IMSE works to strengthen grassroots level governance and effective participation of poor, particularly women, in decision-making process so that they themselves can decide their development priority. IMSE has been able to develop a network of 8000-strong women groups in West Bengal, Orissa and Jharkhand. The organisation has been able to set up its village-level units in more than 700 villages in Eastern India.

The women's network has successfully promoted gender equality at various strata of society and spread awareness about their basic human rights. IMSE implements Economic Empowerment Programme among 43,000 rural women, living below the poverty line. The grass root level organisation has also been promoting agrarian reforms and their implementation. By doing so, IMSE highlights an alternative development paradigm.

It encourages voluntarism among people to organise the deprived sections of society so that they may learn to raise their voices for a just society.

## **Vision:**

A society based on egalitarian principles and food sovereignty.

## **Mission:**

Ending socio-economic exploitation by enabling people to claim and exercise their democratic rights through social movements and participation in democratic decision-making

## **Women Empowerment-**

“Women in our country face discrimination, violence and humiliation from womb-to-tomb. Institute For Motivating Self Employment (IMSE) strives to provide the society with an environment where it does not hurt to be a women.”

Keeping in pace with the previous years, in the year 2018-19 , IMSE’s major focus was on women empowerment programme following its gender policy of the organization by mainstreaming gender aspect in all its programmes. IMSE’s social activities to achieve the targeted goal so that the poorest of the poor may get the benefits have started yielding results.

IMSE’s women empowerment projects included Capacity building of women activists, imparting trainings to peasant women in three states of Eastern India - West Bengal , Odisha and Jharkhand in order to support self help groups at community levels so that they can emerge as strong women’s network. This programme was successful and the peasant women gave leadership to various social movements in IMSE’s working areas. IMSE’s Head Quarters at 195 Jodhpur Park at Kolkata, the hub of various development programmes, hundreds of activists of IMSE in West Bengal, Jharkhand and Orissa worked tirelessly with great devotion for changing the basic socio-economic structure of the society.

IMSE has been engaged in the following programmes in last one year to translate its belief into reality and for the betterment of the poor and needy women:

**Swadhar Greh:** IMSE strengthened its Short Stay Home/Swadhar Greh running since 1993 with the financial assistance from Government Of India, for distressed women. IMSE provided shelter to distressed women in its Swadhar Greh at Krishnakunja, Vill. Malancha, P.O. Singi, District Purba Bardhaman and had been successful in rehabilitating a good number of women in the society by developing their skills and extending counselling services. Socially and economically marginalized women have been provided with shelter and support and provided with proper rehabilitation. A large number of inmates of the home have been provided with proper rehabilitation both socially and economically since the inception.

**Anganwadi programme:** With the Govt. of India, since 1983 IMSE runs a training centre for Anganwadi Workers under ICDS Scheme of Government Of India. IMSE also organized regular health check up camps for the mothers and their children in remote areas in different district. However, it was always felt that the economic development programme of the women was a precondition for women empowerment. Running for more than 30 years now , Anganwadi programme has been running successfully performing pro poor activities.

## **Pre-Primary Education Centres**

Running of pre-primary education centres for the children in the remote villages particularly who came from the families of the workers of the unorganised sector got adequate importance in 2017-18. IMSE organized a few pre-primary education centres called Ankur in Birbhum in

West Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha. This programme drew the wide spread attention of the workers of the unorganized sector in rural areas.

### **Youth Empowerment-**

IMSE works towards the promotion of democratic norms and values and capacity building of youths for self-employment in Eastern Indian states, to strengthen grassroots level governance and effective participation of poor in decision-making process so that they themselves can decide their development priorities.

### **Youth Awareness Camps**

IMSE conducts several workshops pan West Bengal. Through these series of workshops IMSE has reached out to a large number of youths in various colleges and universities and engaged in dialogue and discussions on how they practice democracy in their everyday lives. IMSE engages the students in a Focussed Group Discussion using a Participatory Research survey tool to have a real-time and anonymous survey with the students. Hence providing the students with :

- Awareness and sensitivity of their roles in practicing democracy in everyday life.
- In depth knowledge about democratic practices and reforms associated with our electoral democracy.
- Wide participation to help in building confidence.
- Wide exposure to the perspectives of individuals from across the nation.
- A part of a cohort of students who are sensitized and active citizens.

### **Workshop on responsible use of social media**

IMSE has been actively organizing training workshops focusing on “Responsible Use Of Social Media “ wherein social media users from all age groups are made aware and trained on how to use social media judiciously . Journalists , Cyber Detectives and Senior Representatives from the Cyber Cell Department Of police are invited to share their valuable suggestions and experiences.

### **Street Theatre**

IMSE organizes several street theatres with the youth focusing on various contextual issues thereby raising awareness on civil rights.

### **Capacity Building of Self Help Groups –**

We have been working diligently on value addition, organizing fairs and providing office outlet display for visibility and marketing of the various articles made by the women of the self help group. We also work towards empowering fisherwomen community in Odisha, we are also successful in doing policy advocacy for fisherwomen, providing fishermen card and providing better benefits from the government than before. IMSE also works towards the empowerment of tribal women in Jharkhand District since late 70s fighting for their right to equal wages, right

to food, women participation in joint forest management committee to ensure active participation.

IMSE mobilized subsistence women entrepreneurs in different districts in the rural areas and supports them to run their small enterprises. Selected leaders are trained with different skills with a value addition in different enterprises. IMSE's subsistence women entrepreneurs' development programme was always linked with social development programme and programme for rights. This programme resulted into economic self reliance of many women. Economically empowered women became able to exert their rights in their families and societal levels. Through Self Help Group Promotion Programme, IMSE also mobilised peasant women and makes them aware about their democratic rights.

### **Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture**

Sustainable agriculture is the act of farming using principles of ecology, the study of relationships between organisms and their environment. The phrase was reportedly coined by Australian Agricultural Scientist Gordon M C Clymount. It has been defined as an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will last over the long term.

IMSE organized a number of awareness generation camps making small scale producers aware of their rights as farmers and sensitizing them about opportunities to practice sustainable agriculture in a viable way. To facilitate/support, groups of small scale food producers were trained to acquire new knowledge and skills on methods of making small scale farming/organic farming viable like preservation of local seeds, techniques of sustainable production practices collectivization, marketing and so on.

### **Kitchen garden-**

Women members of IMSE have been provided training in sustainable agriculture and taught the use of organic manure .They were further taught to make kitchen garden which provided them with nutritious food throughout the year

### **Collaboration with Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA):**

IMSE has been collaborating with SEWA and organizing various Awareness Camps and Meetings in order to increase the capacity of the poor women peasants from Odisha, Jharkhand and Birbhum and to promote sustainable agriculture and family farming. We organize extensive workshops, meetings and awareness camps in a way where the women farmers , fisherwomen etc could participate and put forward their views, ideas and problems based on their field experiences without inhibitions. The participants are made aware about the root causes of the problems linked with chemical-agriculture. They are provided with transparent ideas about the harmful effects of the chemical effects and fertilizers based eco-degrading agriculture so that they could become vocal and united to resist such menace. We work on the following components like "Policy Advocacy", "Organizational Capacity Building ", "FO Capacity Building" , "Management Capacity Building", "Value Chain And Market Linkage". We also organize exposure visits for our women farmers and fishermen in order to exchange views.

### **Aromatic Plants Cultivation**

We, at the “Institute For Motivating Self Employment (IMSE)” have been exploring possibilities by performing a pilot project of planting aromatic crops like lemon grass, lavender, rosemary and medicinal plants like ashwagandha and satavar. And the whole project is being run by our women farmers because we at IMSE believe that the women farmers are as productive and enterprising as their male counterparts. Even then they are less able to access land, credit, agricultural inputs, markets and high-value agri-food chains and also obtain lower prices for their crops. This is a prime factor behind women and girls in rural areas suffering disproportionately from multi-dimensional poverty.

In this context it is important to mention here that women and girls play a crucial role in ensuring the sustainability of rural households and communities through improving rural livelihoods and overall wellbeing. From doing Informal work to performing the bulk of unpaid care and domestic work within families and households in rural areas, women account for a substantial proportion of the agricultural labor force. They make significant contributions to agricultural production, food security and nutrition, land and natural resource management, and building climate resilience.

### **Promotion of Traditional Health Care Practices:**

Traditional system of medicine continue to be widely practiced on many accounts till date. Inadequate supply of drugs, population rise, huge cost of treatments, side effects of several synthetic drugs and development of resistance to currently used drugs for infectious diseases have lead to the increased demand for using plants and herbs for medicinal purposes. In 2017-18, IMSE continued its programme in its project areas in West Bengal and Jharkhand for the promotion of tribal medicine and acupuncture among indigenous communities and others, as peoples’ alternative to promote realization of right to health of the poor and marginalised indigenous groups. IMSE’s herbal tribal medicinal programme has already drawn wide spread attention of the people from different walks of life. Health check up camps and blood donation camps organized in Jharkhand , Odisha and Krishnakunja and Birbhum.

### **Rural Tourism-**

An alternative tourism by preserving the culture and heritage of West Bengal has been implemented this year which was in an experimental stage in the previous year, This is an effort towards promoting Rural tourism and to preserve the culture and heritage of rural West Bengal.

### **Save River Save Villages Programme**

In West Bengal, people depend on their agricultural production and live in immediate relationship with nature. Therefore the proper functioning of the river systems is a foundation for food security/sovereignty of the people. The social workers of IMSE are committed to poverty alleviation for the past 30 years of work, have followed the steady and injurious

evolution of the Kopai-Kuia River in the district of Birbhum in West Bengal. They saw at close range the troubles the villagers had to face as a consequence of floods and of the changes in the river's behavior as a result of the development decisions and climate change.

A number of Civil Society Consultations were arranged in 2018-19 by IMSE, followed by regular village meetings concentrating on the problems created by Kopai-Kuia River due to mismanagement of the river water. It was found that 76 villages were affected during the rainy season and it was planned that the affected villages with a total population of 64,221 persons would be visited in the forthcoming months and years for raising public opinion for people centric river water management.

Eminent river scientists have performed some field visits as a part of the fact finding mission.

### **Strengthening Grassroots Governance:**

IMSE organized a number of training programmes the target groups of which were social activists, small and marginal peasants, subsistence entrepreneurs, health workers and so on. IMSE training programmes included generating awareness about the economic-social cultural rights, practicing sustainable agriculture, the significance of cultivating herbal tribal medicinal plants, mother and child health care, self help group promotion, generating awareness from different aspects of ecology, environment and climate change etc. IMSE also imparted training to the elected representatives of the PRIs for activating Gram Sansad to achieve the goal of a functional democracy. Initiative has been taken to strengthen Gram Sansad and to enable them to take decision for the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices, the significance of cultivating herbal tribal medicinal plants, mother and child health care, self help group promotion, generating awareness from different aspects of ecology, environment and climate change etc in order to protect the poor from ill-health conditions, environmental hazards and for food security.

IMSE organized several awareness camps in selected pockets during the Panchayat Election 2018 .Thereby raising awareness among the rural voters and to encourage them on being responsible voters and make an informed choice.

### **Recognizing Social Workers**

IMSE has taken the pledge to recognize the social workers who are providing meaningful contribution to the social sector through their good work but are yet to receive recognition. IMSE honors them with the " Biplab Halim Memorial Award " each year in order to encourage them further .

### **Support Services and Networking**

IMSE like earlier years extended support services to a good number of small organizations such as Forum of Voluntary Organisations West Bengal, Pension Parishad West Bengal, FIAN West Bengal, East Coast Fish Workers Union, Workers Owner Forum, Peoples Action Network

National Integration and Communal Harmony, Indian Federation of Toiling Peasants, Right to Information Network and others to facilitate the process of meaningful social change.

### **Research and Documentation**

IMSE put major emphasis on conducting participatory action research on various issues in 2017-18 - Role of Sustainable Agriculture in ensuring household food sovereignty, ways to establish a functional democracy, Deprivation of elderly people from old age pension, transparent governance, economic empowerment of rural poor and restricting rural to urban migration were undertaken by IMSE among others. The outcome of those participatory researches have strengthened the organization further.

We have worked under various UN bodies such as FAO, UNHRC, COFI, IFAD on various UN Guidelines on Land tenure and small scale fisheries

### **Seminars, Workshops, Visits etc.**

IMSE organised a no. of seminars, trainings, workshops etc. for the multi stakeholders of civil society at Kolkata and other places.

In the year 2018-19 IMSE organized a good number of seminars, workshops on various subjects such as on democratic reform, peoples' media, entitlements for poor villagers, good governance through Gram Sansad, minimum pension for the elderly people, particularly who are from the unorganized sector, women empowerment and so on. IMSE's representatives also participated in a no. of trainings, workshops and field visits in different states and also in Delhi during this period.

### **Administration & Coordination**

For successful coordination of its various programme spread over hundreds of villages in three states of West Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha, the Administrative wing of IMSE remained always active in 2018-19. In 2018-19, IMSE made arrangement to build the capacity of its core staff members at the head quarters for planning, monitoring, evaluation (PME), computerization of accounts etc. and thus to facilitate the successful implementation of its various programmes .