



**Project Title:** Educational Support to vulnerable girl children - Day boarding Education Centre.

**Project Sector :** Development and Protection of Girls

**Project Implementer:** Nishtha  
Subuddhipur, De Para,  
Baruipur, South 24-Parganas,  
West Bengal, India, Pin – 700144  
Phone: – 91-33-2433 1925 / 9865  
Email: nishtha1975@gmail.com,  
nishtha\_1234@yahoo.com  
Website: www.nishthaindia.org

**Geographical Coverage:** Tongtala  
Block: Baruipur, South 24-Parganas  
West Bengal, India

## **Introduction**

Nishtha, a totally community based organization was born in the mid-seventies. From the very beginning, its aim was to empower of the women / girls through awareness building on women's/girls' rights amongst them and empowering them to demand such rights. Nishtha presently works in more than 250 villages in 5 blocks in the District

of South 24 Parganas and recently in Bhutnir Char, a place in Malda district which rose out of the river Ganga shifting the course and washing out houses of many, leaving the people in very poor and under served state.

Nishtha emphasise on the coordinating nature and tradition with modern learning tools to foster grassroots understanding about the needs and application in all spheres of the life as a contour of sustainable development. Its campaigns against child marriage, trafficking, domestic violence and gender discrimination has endeared the organisation in government and non-government circles by its inherent qualities.

The programmes of Nishtha are a reflection of continuous self analysis & subsequent proactive revisions that made us a participatory resource centre for community women, youths and elderly in the field of education and health for our target area.

## **Background**

In the rural areas the parents do not feel it prudent to send their girl children to school and feel it as rather non- productive. They regard it as a luxury and also worry that if their girls become well educated then they have to search for a better bridegroom who will cost a dowry beyond their limits. Normally, the birth of a girl is not a happy event, but as a burden.

Those fortunate girls, who get the opportunity to go to school, are also pressurised to abandon education owing to their marriages. The distance of the schools from their home is also a big obstacle. The school authorities and the teachers are also not gender sensitive and seem to be careless about the problems of the girls. In general, this type of attitude and environment for girls becomes the major causes for girl students' drop out.

Various factors which lead to drop out of the schools in great numbers are:

- Girls who fail in the exams or perform poorly are taken immediately out of school as compared to boys as parents feel that education is not relevant for the girls and the first opportunity they get where the girl under – perform is taken as an opportunity to take them out of school.
- Adolescent Girls having to travel some distance to High schools from homes because of the relatively lesser number of High schools as compared to primary schools. Also, the toilet facilities in most of the schools are not up to the mark for the growing adolescent girls.

- Most of the girls who go to school are either first generation learner or her parents are not adequately educated to understand the importance of education of their girl child.
- Parents feel that a grown up and educated girl will require more dowry and a better bridegroom which will not be economically possible for the parents. Also, if they marry their girl early the parents will not be morally responsible in case of the girl faces any incident of eve teasing or if they fell in love or run away from home.
- Girls are often taken out of school and put to work be it inside the house (cooking & other household work, sibling care or taking care of cattle) or outside the house to add to the family income.

One of the main tools in both awareness building on rights and empowerment is education, especially for the girl child. Various factors make Girls' education up to the end of High School absolutely essential for their liberation and full development:

- They receive essential information and knowledge. They also get into the habit of collecting information through books/computer and get familiarised with a huge source of enjoyment as well as knowledge opens for them.
- They can spend a good amount of time each day with their peers and teachers and in turn they will learn to mix with the world, outside the limits of their homes
- They can spend the day time within a safe shelter, when their parents go out to work. They are thus safe, not only from molestation and its threat, but also from being pressurized for early marriage – sometimes trafficking in the name of marriage.
- By the time the girls leave high school, they are of age, physically, mentally, emotionally and intellectually mature. They are confident, somewhat self-reliant, ready to enter adult life & begin to earn and marry, if they wish so. They have learnt to live with dignity and negotiate peacefully with the outside world including the employers on the one hand and husbands and the in-laws on the other.
- During and after schooling they may also learn a marketable trade and earn a reasonably good living and may not be left in the lurch in case they are driven out from their husband's house.

The situation of West Bengal in context of education of girls is even worse as the state stand at fourth in gross drop out rate from Class I – X only after Bihar, Sikkim and Rajasthan (Information source: Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India, for 2004-05). Although Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan / Mission has tried to reduce the drop out rate but there is a lot to be done in order to ensure that the girls continue their education.

<b>Gross Dropout Rates Girls of Schools of General Education in 2004-05</b>			
<b>States / Nation</b>	<b>Classes I-V</b>	<b>Classes I-VIII</b>	<b>Classes I-X</b>
<b>West Bengal</b>	<b>44.10</b>	<b>63.55</b>	<b>80.24</b>
<b>India</b>	<b>25.42</b>	<b>51.28</b>	<b>63.88</b>

Source: Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India

The interlinking relation between the drop out rate and child marriage is well known to all of us. As girls drop out because of marriage and of the dropped out girls are married earlier. The relation between the above mentioned information and data can be well understood as according to the Rapid Household Survey conducted across the country, West Bengal stands at number three position in child marriage only after Bihar and Rajasthan with an average of 54.9 percent.

Baruipur Block of South 24 Parganas in West Bengal is no exception in terms of above disqualifying attributes for women and adolescent girls. Being part of the agrarian chain under threat of urbanization of late, the area and people are even more vulnerable with loss of ancestral security of land and agricultural activities. The urbanisation is not only eating up a lot of agricultural land, but is also paving the way for increase in the evils of urbanization, especially trafficking of young girls. We, therefore, need to be doubly alert to protect the girls in the area.

Realizing that girls are most vulnerable to all kinds of exploitations and violence at the age of 11 to 18 years and need all our support at that age to develop their full potentials and live happy and purposeful lives, Nishtha took up a programme for the girls of that age group in the Block Baruipur under the programme named "ADARINI (the cherished one)," Nishtha runs a Day Shelter to ensure that the mainstreamed girls should continue their education as there is a need of ensuring that the girls don't drop out of school and is retained till high schools. Also, there are many girls in the community, attend the school in the morning. As they attend school in the morning they are left alone at home which increases their vulnerability towards various forms of abuses. Also, mostly parents of these girls are first generation learner or have very low level, so, the girls often become unable to cope up with the pace of the formal school syllabus and starts performing poorly and become unable to graduate to next class or become vulnerable to drop out of school without proper educational guidance. At the same time it carries out a continuous and intensive campaign and awareness on the necessity of Girls' Education, evils of Early Marriage and benefits of sustainable farming is being conducted.

Nishtha during the last academic year started a pilot project to ensure a Day Shelter for the girls in Tongtala village of Baruipur block where Nishtha had for 100 girls. Initially, we faced lots of problem to convince the family members as they were unwilling to let their daughter stay away from home for a long period i.e. the school hours and the hours spent in the day centre. The girls were supposed to help in the household work and look after the younger siblings. It took series of meetings to convince the parents and involve the girls into mainstream school and about girls' rights to education and development. These girls are provided with education back up support (coaching / tuition support) so that they can improve their educational performance and hence reduce their chance to drop out. Apart from that it provides a place where they can draw, paint, sing and dance i.e. where they can have an all round development. Gradually, their academic performance and personality started increasing and the parents along with girls also started observing the change. Most of the girls of Day shelter are front runners in the academic performance of their classes (who initially were amongst worst performers).

Now, we proposed initiative will provide a much needed guidance to the 150 girls in the age-group 11 to 18 to continue till High School Education in the vicinity of Tongtala village and to better performance in the schools, so that these girls get a dignified life, protection from early marriage and a chance to develop physically, mentally and emotionally before they enter adult life.

## **Outcome**

- The girls will be ensured with their basic rights like right to education, and to lead live in dignity.
- The perception and position of girls in the society will change and they will not be seen as burdens.
- These girls will become role models for other girls in their villages and in turn could aspire and even lead a life with equal opportunities.

## **Output**

- 150 girls are supported to continue their education till High school level and for all round development through various creative activities.
- 150 girls in adolescent age get socially protected against abuse and child marriage.
- Active participation and involvements of school authorities, educational department and panchayats for girl child education and equal opportunities to girls.

## **Strategies**

- Providing an after – school coaching (back up support) for girls living in and around Tongtala.
- Ensuring all round development of these girls by developing not only the educational but also the physical and cultural development.
- Forming group of girls who will be well aware on various issues and act as peer educators.
- Involving and motivating parents to continue the education of their girls.

## **Activities**

- Upgradation of Day Shelter

To accommodate one hundred & fifty girls we will be requiring upgradation of the present infrastructure. At ground floor there is a need of construction at the ground level to make the day shelter appropriate for session even in rainy season and which includes floor, windows, doors, walls. Also, there is a need of kitchen, dining hall, store room and toilet block. At first floor we would like to have a hall room with temporary partition which can be used not only for taking classes for children but also conducting special session with children and organising trainings. We have consulted local engineers which told us that it will take around Rs.50,00,000 but we would like to finalise after duly consultation of engineer from your behalf and work may be stretched over a period of two to three years.

It will be a matter of great support if we have small cottages for residential staff but we have not included this under this proposal and budget.

- Provision of Day Shelter:

The selected hundred & fifty & fifty girls will be provided with a shelter where they are safe once their morning schools are over (also both the parents has gone to work). They will be involved in various creative activity to ensure their all round development apart from the back up support to ensure their greater interest and better performance in formal schools.

- Provision of school fees, uniforms, books & other educational material:

The selected hundred & fifty girls will be provided with school fees, uniforms, books & other educational material so that economic constraint never comes as a factor of them being dropped out of school.

- Home visit:

Home visit of the supported girls in order to better understand the situation and dynamics of their family, build rapport with the family members, building

awareness amongst them, for ensuring smooth attendance and performance of girls etc.

- Adolescent group formation, meeting & awareness:  
Periodical meeting of the girls on fortnightly basis and gradually building a group of peer educators from them by imparting leadership skill, theatre skill, confidence building and information about various social issues who in turn will aware other girls and community.
- Hobby Club:  
In order to ensure the all round development of the girls not only the day shelter will enhance their educational skills but also the physical and cultural aspect by involving them in extra curricular activities.
- Parents meeting:  
Conducting periodical meeting with the parents on monthly basis, so that a change occurs in the attitude of the parents towards their girls and the stop discriminating them on the basis of gender. Also, to motivate and ensure that they marry their girl only after she is eighteen years old.
- Focus group discussion (FGD):  
Organising focus group discussion with girls and their parents, to have a clear understanding of their views about girl child, their education and development, early marriage etc. This will also help to analyse the change in their attitude or point of view on the same.
- Training of education volunteers / staffs  
Training of staffs on various project related issues which include the basic orientation on child rights, gender issues, ill effects of early marriage etc. For education volunteers the training will also include the skills to provide better coaching like multi level – multi group, lesson plan / session plan from syllabus, analysis of child's performance and preparing strategy accordingly.
- Teachers – Education Volunteers Interaction:  
In order to monitor attendance and performance of the girls in the formal school, continuous interaction with the school authorise and teachers will be done. This will help education volunteer to know the feedback of the teachers on the performance, attendance, strength and weakness of the girls which in turn will assist them to focus and strategise on the same, to deliver better results. Also, the continuous interaction will increase the participation of the teachers and school authorities for the cause.
- Monthly meeting of staffs:

Monthly meeting of project staffs to analyse the development of the project and strategise for next month. It will also act as a platform for capacity building of new staffs.

## **Programme Management**

### Superintendent:

The superintendent will be overall in-charge of the day shelter whose responsibilities include liaison and reporting to donor agencies and Secretary of the organisation; planning of intervention, ensuring proper budgeting, guiding all staffs of the programme.

### Education Volunteer:

The responsibilities of education volunteer includes providing educational support to the girls, carry out visit homes of the girls, assist in carrying out health check ups, carry out meeting with the girls group and parents, seeking feed back from the teachers regarding performance and attendance of the girls, follow up visits to the panchayats and education departments, and associated reporting & documentation.

### Physical Training Instructor

The responsibility will be to ensure physical development of the girls by providing training of yoga and other sports.

### Art Instructor

Provide training of girls on drawing.

### Dance Instructor

Provide training of girls on dancing.

### Accountant:

Maintaining accounts of the project, providing periodic reports to project manager regarding budget management like expenditure, forecast, variance analysis etc.

### Cooks

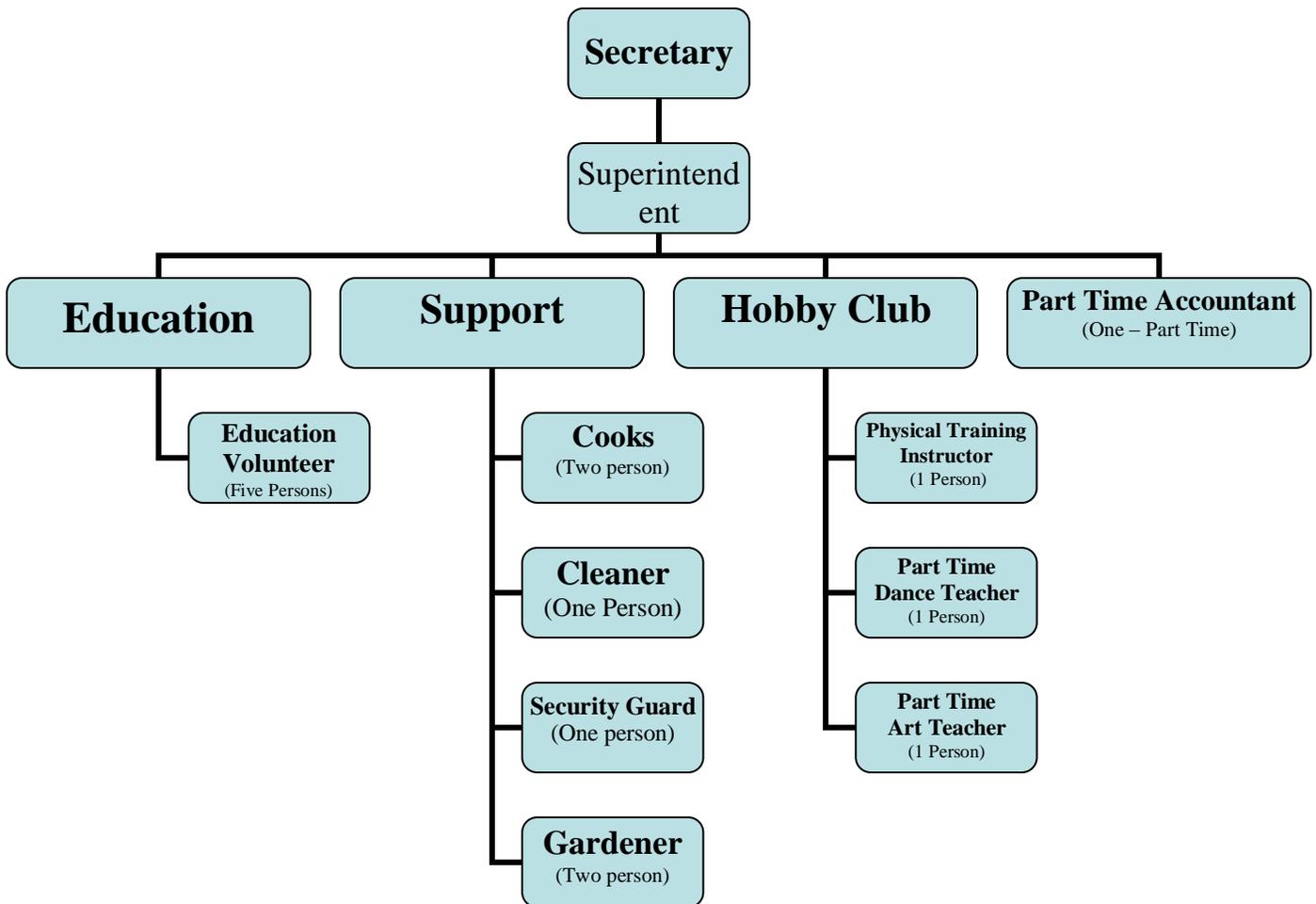
Preparing the food for the inmates as per the food chart, preparing requisition of ingredients.

### Gardeners

Ensuring the greenery of the day shelter and maintaining its gardens.

### Cleaner

Ensuring the cleanliness of home.



### Security Guard

Ensuring safety of the inmates and the emergency shelter, also assisting cook and purchasing ingredients as per requisition.

### Budget

The overall cost of implementing the project **Rs. 150,65,643** (for total of five years). A detailed budget is attached as Annex.

### Measurable Indicators

- Performance of girls in their school examination will be a good indicator as through this project we will be providing them an extra support for their education which will in turn improve their result and hence motivation of them as well as their parent's, towards retention in school.
- The attendance of the girls in school as well as in the day shelter through attendance register will be an indicator as a frequent absenteeism from

schools shows high chances of getting drop out of school or getting married. Also, this will help the project staffs to plan their home visit and one to one strategy for the girls attending coaching centre.

- Focussed group discussion with the girls and their parents which will show the change in their point of view towards girl's education, early marriage and gender discrimination.
- Feedback for the school teacher regarding the effectiveness of the project, and performance & attendance of the girls in formal schools.

## **Sustainability**

The project is planned to run for five years. In these five years the supported girls will start acting as peer educators and with their performance and confidence, they will become the role models (brand ambassador) in the community and they community will also start visualising girls as an empowered & educated entity.

Also, through periodic meetings and awareness with the parents, panchayats members and education department their will be gradual change in the attitude of them towards the girl children, their education and early marriage.

Through other initiatives of Nishtha related to livelihood and income generation, there will be an increase in the income, quality of life and the purchasing capability of the community. As during the project period, the educational cost of their children taken care of, the family in turn have more capital to invest in their livelihood and in turn have a further increment I their income. So, the parents with their increased income will be able to bear the cost of education of their girl child.

These changes in terms of awareness, income increment and active government support system will in turn ensure that the girls in the community will have an equal opportunity to get educated and in the development.