

Hope is life (2018 – 2021): An Initiative by ASSRA

I. Background Context:

The numerous efforts by central, state government and Non-governmental organisations have been able to bring uplifting change in poverty status of Odisha state as whole. However, the state continues to be the second among bigger states which have maximum number of population below poverty line after Bihar¹. The majority of the population that is around 83% of the state reside in rural area. ASSRA started to work with the most vulnerable people from the south-west Niyamgiri Hill range of Odisha state under the project "**Hope is Life**" supported by the funder Hope is Life, Switzerland.

The hill is the home to the indigenous vulnerable group known as 'Dongria Kondh', a primitive tribal group. The indigenous group are far from the urban lifestyle with a primitive culture depending on forest products and have now learnt to do some agriculture as well. With the rich mineral ore potential such as bauxite, manganese, graphite, limestone and more, it brought attention of different ore companies for Industrialisation. Recently, people of the area are also engaged in different daily labor activities for living. In the meantime development paved its way and helped education to reach them. However, the huge Niyamgiri hill range is not completely discovered. There are many pockets in these hill range which remains unnoticed and need support to grow like others in the urban/developed corners of the state. And so ASSRA stepped into uplift and support those indigenous primitive tribal group, to make their lives better through different initiatives and projects. Understanding that there are many such vulnerable groups in the state where there is a demanding need for health, education and social empowerment, ASSRA started to work with other minority groups in other remote pockets of the state as well.

II. Target group:

Direct beneficiaries under the Hope is life projects are the children, women's and the community as whole in the 3 villages of Bissamcuttack block (Thuapadi, Tadingpai and Ghagudipadar), of Rayagada district, Odisha state. The project villages consist of a total of 280 household with a total population of 1464 of which the large majority belong to 'Dongria Kondha' tribe and only 18 household belong to other scheduled caste. The project focuses on the children and women in the community, by working directly with them and also other stakeholders. Agriculture, forest products and daily labour are primary means of livelihood of the target beneficiaries. ASSRA also extends helping hand to other needy household from Kandhamal, Gajapati and Ganjam district of Odisha through its sponsorship and health project as well.

III. Mission of the Project (Hope is Life):

The mission of the project Hope is Life is to nurture hope of needy people to improve quality of their life.

IV. Belief of the Project:

Each individual have the need to lead a meaningful life with the best quality possible. Taking care of each other need contributes to a better world.

¹ Odisha second bigger state in BPL rank <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/2019/jul/20/odisha-second-bigger-state-in-bpl-rank-2006663.html>

V. Major Projects and Key Achievements:

1. Women Empowerment -project

Target Villages: Tadingipai, Thuapadi, Ghagudipadar

Target group: 540 women from the villages

Goal: To empower women group in the project villages and end violence of all forms against women.

Activities carried out:

- Women groups formed work with the tool of Nonviolent Communication to overcome violence in all forms in family and village.
- Each women group has one leader which is a staff member of ASSRA. This leader is educated in this tool of Nonviolent Communication who facilitates the women group for awareness and conduct empathy workshop, regular meetings to reduce domestic violence.



Key Achievements:

- The 3 village is aware of different forms of violence against women in society and have reduced violence through empathy for each other.
- The Women are much more empowered, open to talk about their own needs and share the needs with their family members.
- Women are able to overcome fear against their own husband
- Women are Educated on hygiene during menstrual period and use of cotton pads

2. Kids Care projects- Theler Kids Care (100 children) House of Hope (35 children)

Target Villages: Tadingipai, Thuapadi, Ghagudipadar

Target group: 135 children (age group – 5 to 16 years)

Goal: To educate children by providing coaching, good health environment and skills to solve daily conflicts without violence.

Activities carried out:

- **Theler kids care** building constructed at Tadingipai.
- Appointed teacher provides after school care to 100 children enrolled so far. Children are helped to clear doubts, do their homework and learn additional and important life skills to deal with conflicts in a nonviolent way. They are taught to stay connected with nature, farming and take care of own health taking hygienic measures.
- Children's are motivated to go to government school.
- Daily dinner for all the 100 children provided.
- Because of Covid now childrens are taught in small groups following SOP maintaining social distancing, sanitizing and wearing mask.
- Similarity **House of Hope** building constructed at Thuapadi for 35 childrens and the teacher appointed provides the education like in the Theler kids care centre.



Key Achievements:

- We started with 20 children in a small house and now a days we have two Kids Care center and supporting 135 Children



- Children are hygienic and in a good health
- Children are visiting government school regularly and get better marks (now closed because of Covid)
- Children understand the value of education and importance of peace



3. Sponsorship Project

Target Villages: Tadingipai, Thuapadi, Ghagudipadar, Coloniside (Bissamcuttak, Rayagada), Mohana, Ashrayagada (paralakhemundi, Gajapati), Patapura (Ganjam)

Target group: 20 children, one young woman

Goal: To fulfil basic needs of the children such as food, education and health treatment through sponsorship.

Activities carried out:

- Childrens from family suffering critical problems are supported for health treatment, education and good food.
- 20 children have been continuously supported till now. The children are from poorest family. Issues such as HIV, mental health and disability are the cause for suffering. Besides there are orphan, half orphan childrens who aren't able to get their basic needs are supported.
- In some cases we support the whole family. In a family little child who has HIV and his mother is a mental health patient, we support them very closely on a daily basis.

Key Achievements:

- ASSRA saved the life of many children, who would have lost their life without our support.
- They are provided support for good education and health of all this kids
- The children and family regained dignity and acceptance in their own village.

4. Health project;

Target Villages: Tadingipai, Thuapadi, Ghagudipadar, Coloniside (Bissamcuttack, Rayagada) and different rural villages in Kandhamal district- Saramuli, Pangamaha, Bhutedi, bijapur, pangali.

Target group: sick people in the villages

Goal: To provide free and complete health support to patients from target villages who can't afford their own treatment to get cured.

Activities carried out:

- Regular treatment of sick people in project villages Tadingipai, Thuapadi, Ghagudipadar is provided through the health professional appointed by ASSRA.
- Regular health camps conducted different villages by a team of a Doctor, pharmacist to provide free health checkups and treatment of common illnesses.
- Regular checkups and treatment provided to all our kids care children.
- Financial, emotional support and care through the whole process of next level advanced treatment of women and children without financial abilities.
- Ambulance service provided in emergency for the poor patients to travel to nearest District Head Hospital to get admitted and get appropriate treatment.
- Ambulance service team provides also counselling and give support to the victim in cases of domestic violence's and sexual abuses.

Key Achievements:

- 1200 poor people have been provided medical support till now, who would have lost their lives without our support.
- About 26 health camps conducted different villages by a team of a Doctor, pharmacist to provide free health checkups and treatment of common illnesses.
- An ambulance was bought in 2020 to provide the health service to the poor patients of the project villages so that they can travel to nearest District Head Hospital or as referred by the physician.
- About 72 emergency cases are handled with the Ambulance service and have saved lives in time.



5. Covid19 Relief:

Target Villages: 15 villages of 2 Gram Panchayat

Target group: Every individual from 2 GP (Total Household – 1650, Population - 7500)

Goal: To create awareness and provide relief for living and safety measures during the pandemic Covid19 situation in project villages.



Activities carried out:

- Awareness programs were conducted in all villages to obey the rules to prevent Covid19.
- Free relief of food such as Rice, Dal, Soyabean, Potatoe, Onion was provided to all families in the two Gram Panchayat: Paika Dakulguda and Thuapdi
- Masks and Sanitizers were distributed to every households of the two gram panchayat.



Key Achievements:

- 1650 Households of 2 gram panchayat were ensured to have daily food through the food relief distributed.
- Despite the pandemic where many lost their jobs, ASSRA stood to support them.
- People were aware and obeyed to wear masks, maintain social distancing and get sanitized every time during this time.



VI. Conclusion:

The 3 years 2018-2021 was a successful year for ASSRA through its project "Hope is Life". Learning's while implementing the project helped ASSRA to be need focused in modifying the projects. Many achievements have brought change in the lives of many people. The project area needs more support for which ASSRA is determined to withstand the challenges faced during the last 3 years. The learnings are the resource for ASSRA to work to help the people to help themselves by mobilising resources for the upliftment of the indigenous groups.

