

ASSRA's Hope is Life Project (2022 – 2024): A Report

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 in the year 2014 with the most vulnerable people from the south-west Niyamgiri Hill range of Odisha state. 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, these remote areas brought attention of different mining 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 remain unnoticed and the people residing there need support to grow like others in the urban/developed corners of the state. And so ASSRA stepped in to 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 remote of the state, ASSRA started to work with other such poor and needy groups to provide health, education and social empowerment by closely working with them.

II. Target group:

Direct beneficiaries of ASSRA's Hope is life projects are the children, women's and the community as whole in the 4 villages of Bissamcuttack block (Thuapadi, Tadingpai and Ghagudipadar, colony sahi), of Rayagada district, Odisha state. The project villages consist of a total of 340 households with a total population of 1975 of which the large majority belong to 'Dongria Kondha' tribe and only 27 households belong to other scheduled caste. ASSRA 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 households from Kandhamal, Gajapati and Ganjam district of Odisha through its sponsorship and health project as well.

III. Our Mission:

ASSRA's objective is to nurture hope of needy people to improve quality of their life.

IV. Our Belief:

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

V. Major Projects and Key Achievements:

1. Women-project

Target Villages: Tadingipai, Thuapadi, Ghagudipadar, colony sahi

Target group: 590 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.

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

- Each women group has one leader. 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 4 village is aware of different forms of violence against women in society and have reduced violence through empathy for each other.
- The Women's are much more empowered, open to talk about their own needs and share the needs with their family members.
- Women's are able to overcome fear against their own husband
- Women's are Educated on hygiene during menstrual period and use of cotton pads
- Women's are becoming more independent.

2. Kids Care projects- Theler Kids Care (100 children) House of Hope (55 children)

Target Villages: Tadingipai, Thuapadi, Ghagudipadar, colony sahi

Target group: 155 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 children's are taught in small groups following SOP maintaining social distancing, sanitizing and wearing mask.
- Similarly **House of Hope** building constructed at Thuapadi for 55 children's and the teacher appointed provides the education like in the Theler kids care centre.

Key Achievements:

- Two kids care centre have been constructed and used to provide coaching and life skills. About 155 Children get free coaching through the appointed tutor and a good meal in the centre during their studies.
- Children learn about hygiene and good health
- Children are motivated and more number of students go to government school regularly and get better marks.
- Children understand the value of education and importance of non violence and peaceful coexistence caring the nature around.

3. Sponsorship Project

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

Target group: 49 children, two young woman

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

Activities carried out:

- Children's from family suffering critical problems are supported for health treatment, education and good food.
- 49 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 children's 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.
We even support six secondary students along with five nursing students.



Apart from it other courses like radiologist, two students are being supported.

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 sixteen villages including two panchayat.

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:

- 1500 poor people have been provided medical support till now, who would have lost their lives without our support.
- About 39 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 549 emergency cases are handled with the Ambulance service and have 21 saved lives in time.

5. House building project:

Target Villages: The total 16 villages of our project area.

Target group: poor households with no or damaged house in 16 villages of project area.

Goal: To provide security to needy people by providing them a safe house for living in 16 target villages of project area.

Activities carried out:

- Survey of households in 2 panchayat to identify people with no house or damaged house and also who are refrained from the government housing schemes due to different reasons.
- Meeting with village leaders and people to identify the needy household to support through house building project.
- Accepting request letter and collecting household details from interested and needy people to scrutinize the appropriate to avail support to construct house.
- Identifying and liasoning with local builders and vendors to purchase construction materials.
- Organising labour and contractor to start building house.
- Monitoring and reporting the house building work.

Key Achievements:

- Completed survey and effective village meeting with village leaders and identified 100 households who need support to build their house.



- Despite religion, caste and economic differences the people in the villages came together to identify the poor and needy in their respective village and supported the house building project with harmony.
- By now 10 houses have been constructed in 4 villages and the family have started living in their newly build house.

Conclusion:

The 2 years 2022-2024 was a successful year for ASSRA. 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.

Photo Gallery



Theler kids care center



HoH study center



Health camp by Dr. Samir Nayak



Health camp by Dr samir Nayak



