

A New Dimension of Parivaar's work : Services in Tribal Areas

Since March '07 Parivaar has also been developing its field base in highly impoverished tribal areas in Eastern part of the country. We have done fieldwork and developed field volunteer cadres from amongst local villagers in blocks of Bankura, Purulia, Midnapore (East) in West Bengal and Singhbhum (east) in Jharkhand. These areas have some very backward tribes, two of the most impoverished are Sabar and Birhore.

The three main tribal blocks where we have developed field units are:

1. Belpahari in Midnapore (West) district in West Bengal
2. Singhbhum (East) district in Jharkhand
3. Selected tribal pockets in Bankura and Purula districts in West Bengal

From Singhbhum (East) district in Jharkhand, 50 children (mainly from Sabar and Birhore tribes) have already been admitted to Parivaar.

The condition in these villages cannot be described in words. That these brothers and sisters of ours have been languishing for thousands of years in darkness and continue to be in the same condition has been the foremost thought that struck us. The children malnourished, women half-clad, old-aged persons like living corpses. They live in conditions that can hardly be called human. Generation after generation, these people have been living in the same conditions with no better conditions bequeathed to their posterity. The most important resource, namely, the human resource, has remained completely undeveloped. In such material conditions it is no wonder that the lamp of education has not been lit here which has further kept the region in such material conditions. This perpetual misery cannot be broken unless a whole generation of these people is shaken up, quality education given, a total regeneration and unlocking of their human potential happens. The lives transformed in one generation shall surely make way for further progress in future generations once they through education break free from this bonding orbit of ignorance and helplessness.

In Singhbhum (East) district of Jharkhand our field-base covers the following villages :

1. Bhadua
2. Tumankocha
3. Kusumgoga
4. Kadamdiha
5. Chhatardanga
6. Patahrgoda
7. Purnagoda
8. Ballam
9. Amjharna
10. Banki
11. Malkundi
12. Kadiabazaar

13. Kalapathar
14. Moorakati
15. Makuli
16. Bhumradi

In the north-western part of the Midnapore (West) district is Belpahari block which is a predominantly tribal belt. This block has consistently been in news because of a series of starvation deaths reported in the last few years. This is also a highly sensitive area – politically and ‘law and order’ wise. The people in these settlements live on boiled 'jungle alu' with a little rice once in the whole day. The land is totally non-cultivational so there is no possibility of any agricultural activity. They collect some shrubs from the forests and extract adhesive-like substance from that. Also through some shrub fibres ropes are manufactured. This hardly fetches them a sum of Rs 15-20 a day. There is neither electric connection nor water supply. Villagers consume water from small ponds which have stagnant water all round the year. These tribal settlements are very small and scattered, generally 10 to 20 families living at one place. Thus, there is no possibility of any local economic activity either. These settlements are also very far away from any town. Because of this, opportunities for labour activity are also very limited. Since their non-exposure to the outside world is very high, they are very distrustful of outsiders and under-confident of going to far-off towns for any labour work or for other work options.

Out of these villages in Belpahari block, the village Amlasol became infamous in the last few years because of extreme starvation conditions prevailing there.

One can search ‘Amlasol’ to know more about the background of the region.

<http://www.google.co.in/search?hl=en&q=amlasol&meta=>

In Belpahari block of Midnapore (West), Paivaar’s field base covers the following villages which are predominantly Sabar-populated.

1. Rimradanga
2. Dhobakacha – I
3. Dhobakacha - II
4. Chirakuti
5. Purnapani – I
6. Purnapani - II
7. Amlasol
8. Baspahari
9. Amrola
10. Dhangikusum
11. Shushanijabi

On 13th April ‘08, under the inspiration of Swami Satyabodhananda, under whose leadership we first ventured to Belpahari block, a big community meeting cum feast was organised at Udulchua in Belpahari block in which 950 villagers (men, women, and

children) from 20 different tribal settlements participated. Men and women from various settlements spoke about various difficulties that they face in their daily lives. We also gave the entire community, a brief vision of our long-term services and institution-building measures that we shall be having for this region.

In the next one year we are planning to admit 100 children from these settlements into Parivaar Ashram's Residential Institution at Bakhrahat (24 Parganas (South) for their future-building through education. Additionally, in 2009 the plan is to start a Residential Institution at Jhargram (about 50 Km from Belpahari Block itself) which will have a capacity of 500 children by 2011. That will be Parivaar's second big residential campus outside our present location. The girls would be admitted to Parivaar's Girls Campus at Bakhrahat.

Initiative in tribal areas of Bankura and Purulia Districts : Support to a local organization Yugacharya Vivekananda Seva Samity in organizing Tutorship Program for 1100 children (both boys and girls) in a group of tribal settlements.

Parivaar is extending support to a local group YVSS to conduct tutorship program for 1100 students in the following villages in Selected tribal villages of Bankura and Purulia districts.

In Bankura district, the following tutorship centres were functioning :

Amdanga P.O.Nimaipur 139 students (from Class 1 to 9) 74 boys and 65 girls.

Bhangaba P.O.Nimaipur 144 students (from Class 1 to 9) 74 boys and 70 girls.

Kathjudia P.O. Bikrampur 106 students (from Class 1 to 8) 55 boys and 51 girls.

Keshikocha P.O. Bondubrajpur 86 students (51 boys and 35 girls).

Malboni P.O. Bonsaranga 58 students (from Class 1 to 8) 33 boys and 25 girls.

In Puulia district, the following tutorship centres were functioning :

Goalpara P.O.Danardini 122 students (from Class 1 to 10) 61 boys and 61 girls

Haridiah P.O. Dhabani 223 students (from Class 1 to Class 10) 113 boys and 110 girls

Kutni P.O. Kutni 180 students (from Class 1 to 10) 97 boys and 83 girls.

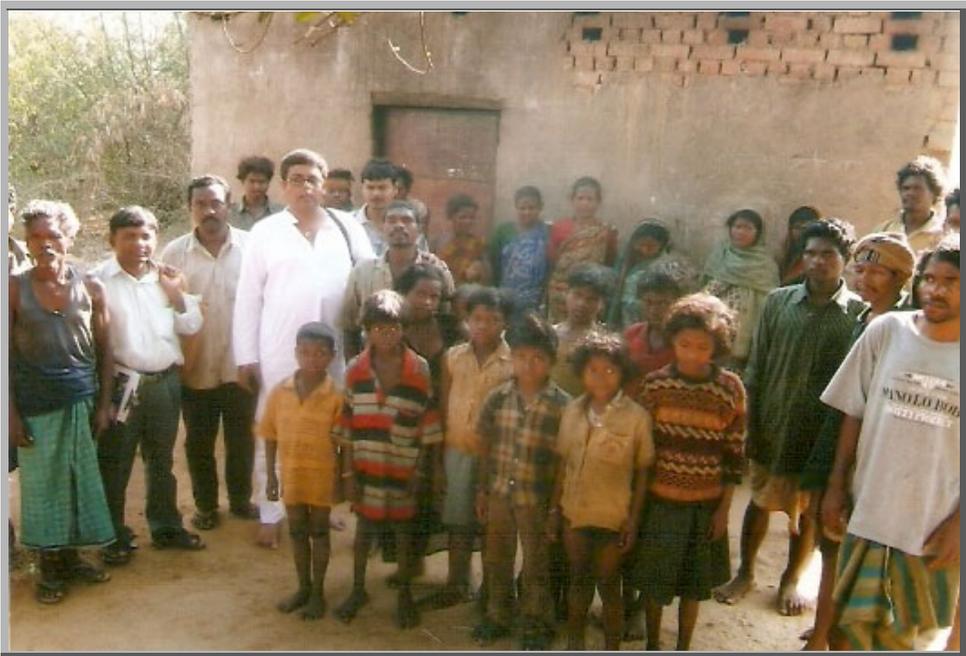
Pictures



Village Survey being conducted by Parivaar team members in Belpahari Block



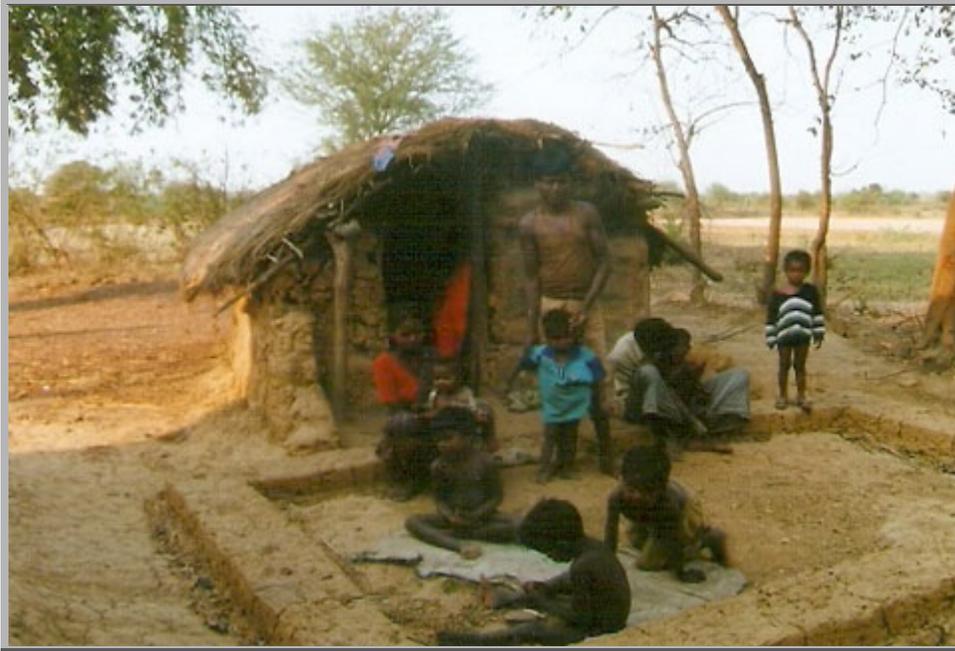
Senior Parivaar Seva-vrati Pulak Banerjee (Pulakda) during a Contact Program in various tribal settlements in Belpahari Block



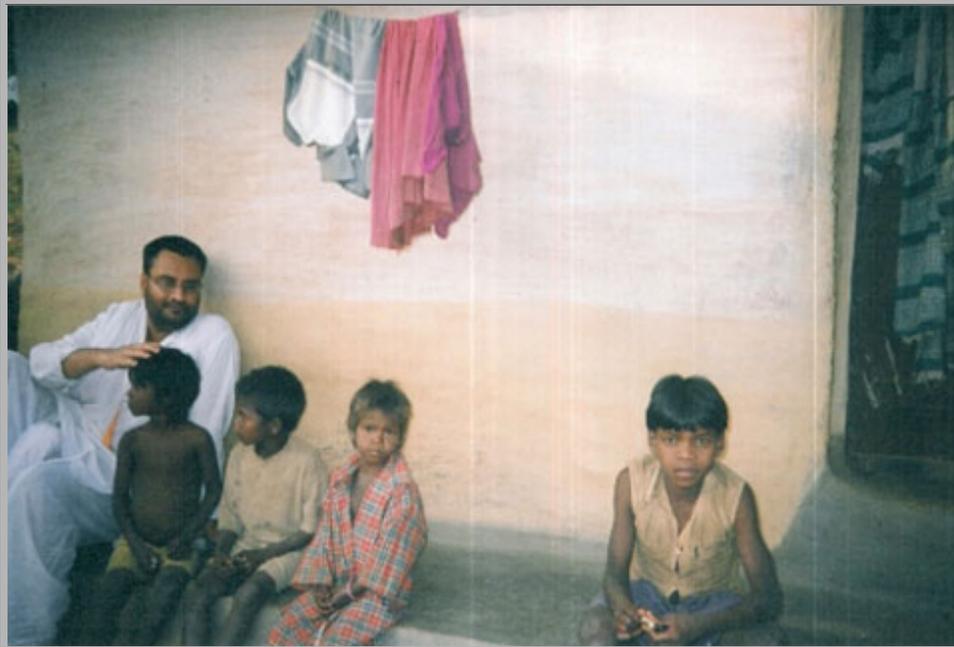




Community Meeting of various tribal settlements being convened by Parivaar team at Rimdadanga (Belpahari block)



This ditch which has stagnant water is used for drinking water purposes



Vinayakda at Amlasol Sabar settlement in Belpahari Block



At Rimdadanga settlement in Belpahari block

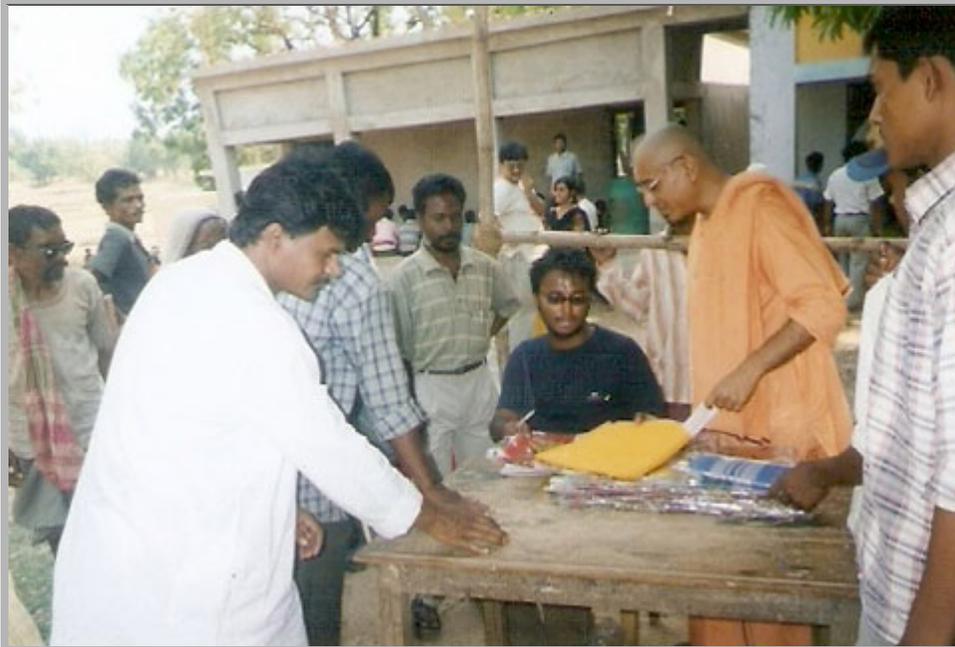


Community Meeting on 13th April '08



Meeting Venue at Udulchua, Belpahari Block





Swami Satyabodhananda at the Community Meeting



Jharkhand - Singhbhum (East) Pictures



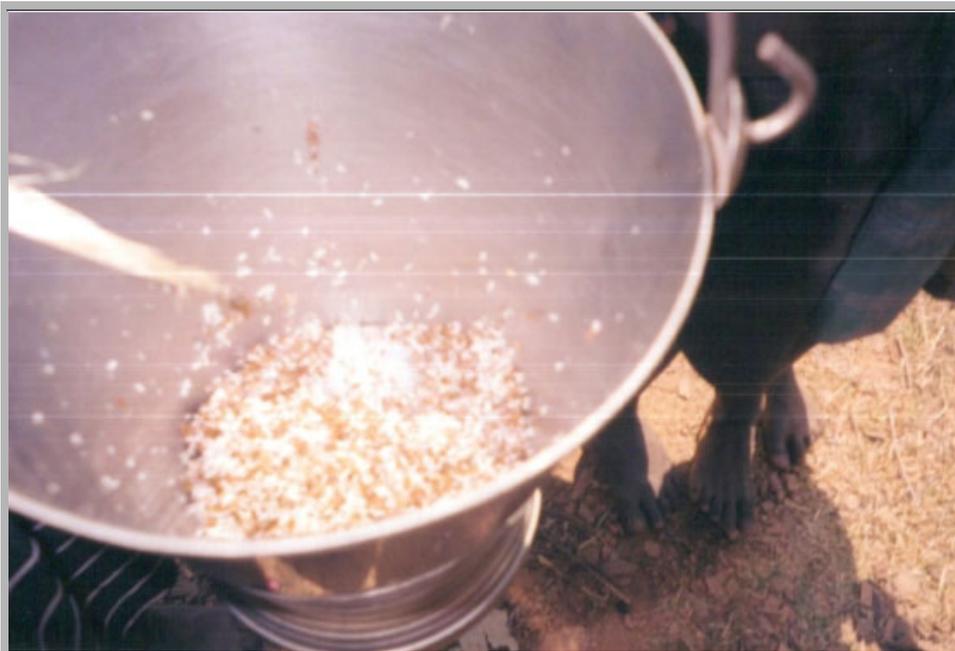
Bhadua village



Tumankocha village



Chhatardanga village



Boiled Rice with red ants is a common food-item



Vinayakda during a community meeting at Bhadua village



Parivaar team conducting village survey for a group of villages in Singhbhum (E)



Village Survey in progress

Children from Jharkhand :The Changed Picture after one year

Since all the 50 children from Jharkhand did not having any exposure to education prior to admission to Parivaar Ashram's Residential Institution, they were first trained through what we call 'Fast-Learning Course' by our battery of teachers, and then after assessing their performance have been admitted to an appropriate class at Parivaar's regular Formal School 'Amar Bharat Vidyapeeth'. Generally the age of child is kept under consideration and attempt is made that at the end of the One Year preparatory period children get admitted to a Class that corresponds to their age. For example, at the end of the preparatory period, a nine-year-old child would be admitted in Class 4 or at least Class 3.



Tutorship Session of Jharkhand Group

<

