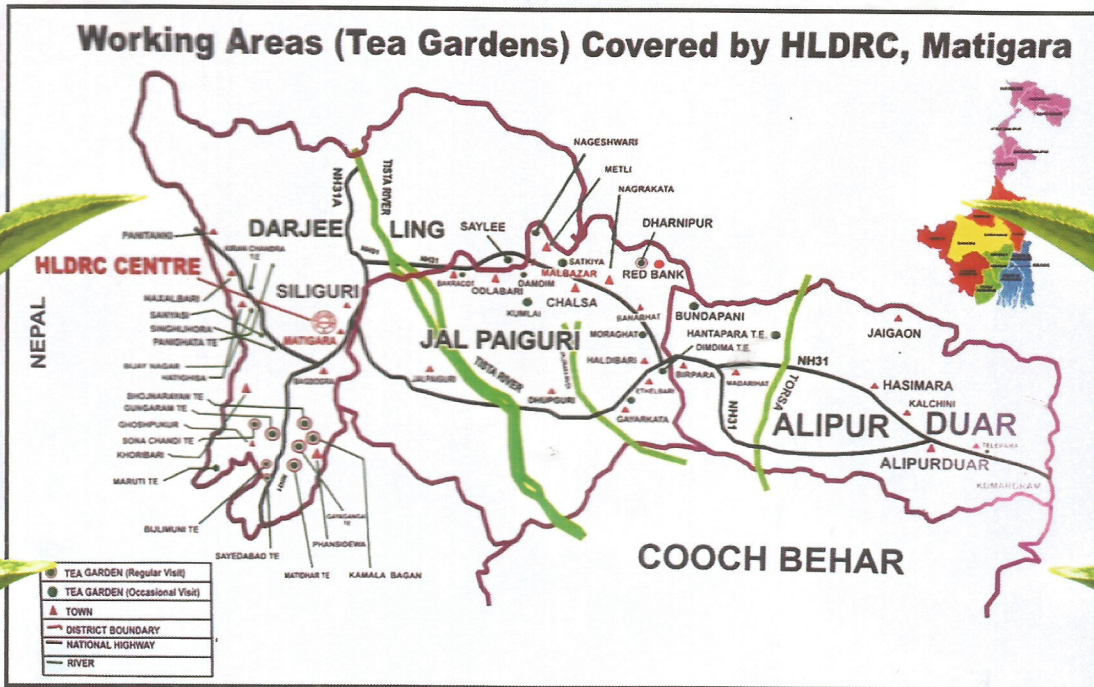


HLDRC

SOCIAL ACTION INITIATIVES

Program Quarterly Report 02

APRIL-JUNE 2022



Director's Message

"Walking with the marginalized" is the central theme of this quarterly report where HLDRC brings out six thematic programs namely **promotion of Livelihood program** through women Self Help groups (SHGs), **Social Agriculture Program (SAP)**, **Employment Training & placement program** to youth in the tea gardens of North Bengal, **Ensuring Social Protection (ESP)** and **building Climate resilient communities**, **Anti Human Trafficking & Migration issues**, **Non Formal Educational Programs** through Study Centres in the remotest locations of tea gardens are some of the SOCIAL ACTION & DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS of Human Life Development & Research Centre (HLDRC).



Fr. Pascal Xalxo, S.J.

It is a continuous and concerted effort by HLDRC and its collaborators to address the various issues of tea gardens in Terai and Dooars region in North Bengal. On the occasion of the 500th year of Conversion of St. Ignatius, wish you a very happy St. Ignatius Feast.



Social Agriculture Project & Non-formal Educational Program Supported by SOS- India

SOCIAL AGRICULTURE PROJECT (SAP)

This project completes its six months. Two villages namely Barogharia and Nowghat in Terai region of Darjeeling district started summer vegetable crops by women Self Help Groups (SHGs). The progress on the cultivation is taking place by women SHGs and few men also involved to support the labour works like fencing, leveling and demarcation of the field. The project Tractor is used for cultivation work with much subsidized price to support the work.

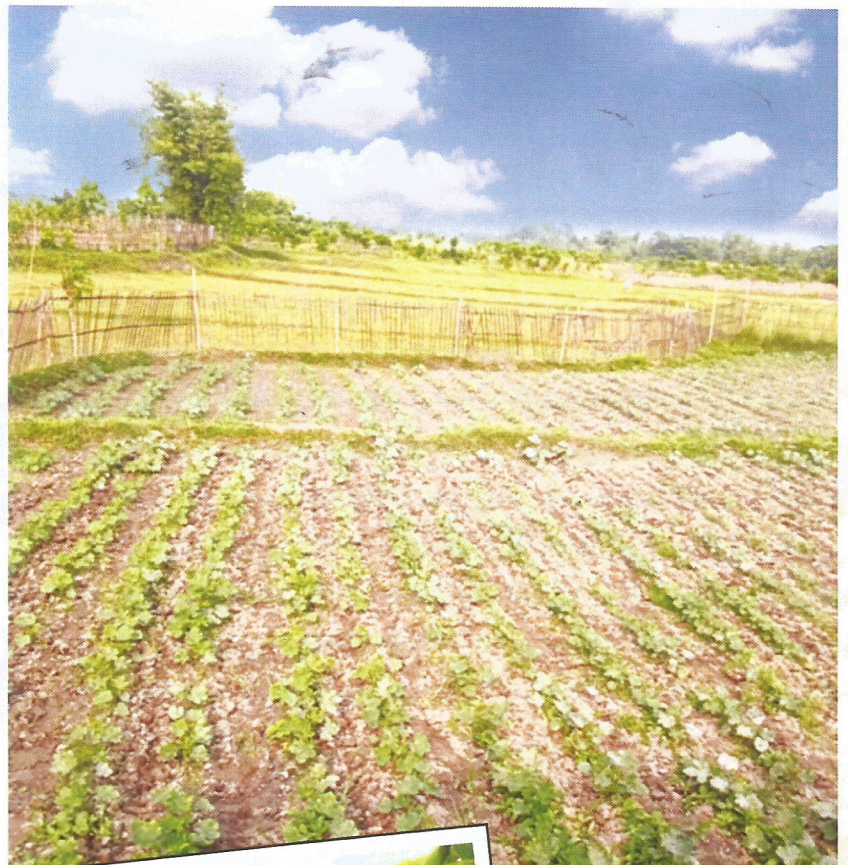


REPORT FROM BAROGHARIA FARM UNIT:

In six Bighas (2 Acre) land was used for summer crops cycle from March-June. Four women SHGs are engaged in this farming activities. First time, summer crop was done in this field. The results are good as the production of crops is quite good. Ladies fingers, beans and other vegetables were cultivated.

REPORT FROM NOWGHAT FARM UNIT:

Nowghat village is HLDRC new project village where two women SHGs are taking up agriculture program in four bighas in this summer time. The river closer to the field is helpful for irrigation works. Ladies fingers, pumpkins are the common crop in the village. Providing security from animal is a constraint factor at the moment however some good yields of pumpkins and ladies fingers are helping women to use for house consumption and selling them in the local markets as well.





DRINKING WATER PROJECT IN DHARNIPUR TEA ESTATE

Dharnipur tea garden is one of the closed tea gardens in Jalpaiguri district. There are 913 households in the tea garden. Panighata line is the project labour line where 72 households and one Primary school children about 160 are beneficiaries of this project. Tea garden closure in 2014 brought several health, food and water crisis in the said villages. People used Diana river water for drinking and domestic purposes. Having high density of dolomite in the running water caused so many health problems for the villagers. On several occasions villagers got small hand pumps but did not get quality water for drinking purposes. The village still suffers from various water born diseases like diarrhea, jaundice, cold fever, stomach upset etc.

Getting water project from **SOS-INDIA** is good news for the villagers. The work has been started already.

STUDY CENTRE PROGRAM

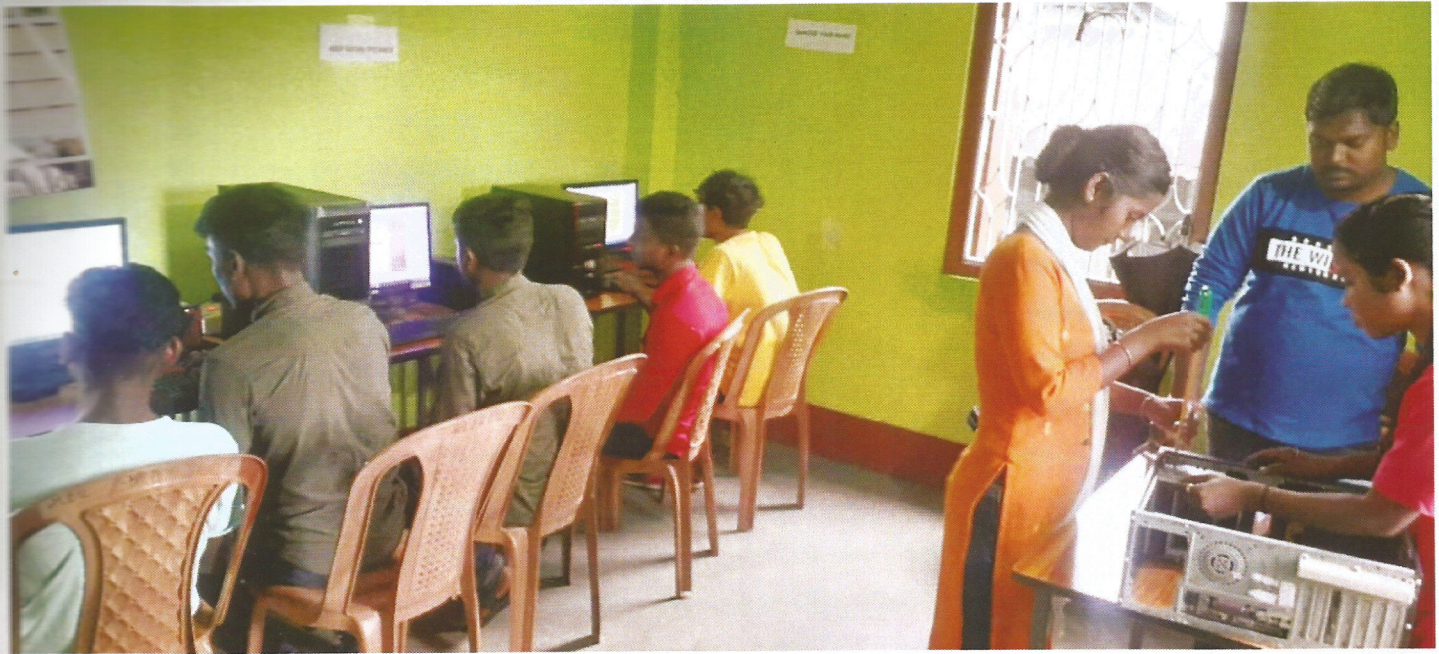


All 12 study centres under SOS-India were reviewed in month of April and a new life was brought by giving teachers orientation and Training every month from month of April onwards. A significant improvement is taking place in this new approach to provide skills of teaching and management of the students in non formal structure of education. Mr. Basil Ekka is HLDRC teachers Trainer at the moment. We have also completed distribution of students' desks in most study Centres which is supported by **SOS-INDIA**, however it was felt to extend to other centres which are managed by HLDRC. Fr. Pascal Xalxo shares his experiences by saying “**Basic quality education at Door steps**”.

SENIOR STUDENTS CLASS IX & X



Students from Class IX and X are supported by special coaching classes at Ramjhora Study Centre. There has been good performance from this initiative in remote locations where education is extremely poor quality in government schools. Small group coaching by teacher to all subjects has been quite effective teaching learning process. **Mr. Rupesh Dahal** is the teacher of this batch. We have a tremendous hope that this focused group teaching learning will address the poorest students in the remote locations of tea gardens. This year 13 students appeared for exam for class X and all 13 have passed as 100% passing result at the moment. We congratulate the students and the teacher for the good result.



COMPUTER HARDWARE TRAINING FOR SENIOR STUDENTS AT GAIRKATA HLDRG BRANCH OFFICE-

Computer hardware course has been very helpful to students those who would like to develop computer hardware knowledge and become a young computer expert in repairing and managing computers at various business establishments and educational institutions. About 10 students both boys and girls are completing six months course in November, 2022 . Mr. Raj Tanti is the Computer Hardware teacher in Gairkata office unit.

EMPLOYMENT TRAINING FOR YOUTH UNDER TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES (TCS)



The second batch of 25 students have started TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES (TCS) at Gairkata HLDRG office from 4th July. This training for graduated students will have great opportunities to get employed in TATA Company and other private sectors as well. Youth are looking for jobs since 2020 due to Covid 19 impact was so severe that thousands of youth men and women have lost jobs. In this background even small initiative by any organization is going to serve the need.

Madam Harshamanjri Nanda is the Trainer from TCS. Fr. Pascal Xalxo, the Director of HLDRG with Mr. Basil Ekka the HLDRG Program manager and Miss Chandrika Beck the office in-charge gave orientation to the students. It was well appreciated by the students.



Youth Employability Program (YEP)

LIVELIHOOD, CAPACITY BUILDING AND SKILLS TRAINING FOR YOUTH IN TEA PLANTATION COMMUNITIES IN NORTH BENGAL SUPPORTED BY CANADIAN JESUITS INTERNATIONAL (CJI)

LIVELIHOOD AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM WITH WOMEN SELF HELP GROUPS (SHGS)-



Women SHGs at remote locations requested for some starter fund from HLDRC to start a small business of Table chairs

renting for village community/social programs where 50 plastic chairs and 10 plastic tables are given out for rent to generate funds. This activity on generating income has been quite successful as there is higher success rate for taking up this business.

SHG taking loan from Bank: **Phul women SHG** from Dagapur Tea Estate near Siliguri town is doing well as women are ready to undertake small scale business by taking 150,000 bank loans. HLDRC provides Entrepreneurship & business skills to make the program successful.



GOATS REARING PROGRAM

HLDRC has been associated with women since 2013 to take forward the women self help group and take them towards advancement. Women Self Help Groups are working in the tea plantation. Family is difficult to sustain with INR 202/- Due to low wages food, education of children, health etc. are getting affected by this. Therefore, on behalf of HLDRC, we have given them wedding utensils to do business to Self Help Groups and they are earning income by renting it.

Every small or big program is helping a lot to villagers. The income of the group is also increasing. Tables and chairs are rented out for INR 1000/- charges for a day. Along with this, goat rearing has been given in Gumguma tea garden labour line. The goat will give two babies to grow them and earn income. Similarly, women are improving their group and their society by doing their small business and animal husbandry. They are able to fulfill their dreams in bringing social awareness on various women and children issues locally and at the same time it is becoming self-reliant communities.

PROVIDENT FUND, GRATUITY HELP DESK FOR TEA WORKERS COMMUNITY



During last quarter **Bikash Barla** and team continued the PF claim intervention at Nagrakata block and a greater success rate on PF claim was noted. He has also conducted three training programs for youth community leaders for how to activate UAN number and Aadhaar card based KYC to tea garden employees.

Tea workers have been benefited from our network and through this help desk effort. Many people have no Aadhaar card or have mistake in names that do not match with their PF account, so they can't withdraw their PF money. In this three month HLDRC has helped with our network around RS. 8,95,63,800 of amount release from PF office to 632 workers.

HLDRC has identified another location and volunteer staff to start the similar HELP DESK at Gairkata HLDRC branch office for month of July 2022 onwards.

SPOKEN ENGLISH & COMPUTER COURSE TO YOUTH



This year also HLDRC started two months summer course on Spoken English & Computer Application for the youth of the tea gardens. The total 36 students are completing the summer course successfully. **Mr. Paul Lakra** and **Mrs. Ritu Panna** for spoken English and **Mrs. Augustina Kujur** and **Mr. Sandeep Lakra** were mentors for computer application. Thanks to all teachers for their valuable mentoring to the students. Now students are getting ready to take admission in English Medium Higher Secondary Schools and batch of 18 students who are doing this summer course are getting ready to join the Degree college.

LEGAL TRAINING WITH COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM



There has been a social movement on Land rights and Minimum wage for tea workers community. The several groups efforts are being made, however a collective initiative was felt to address these issues in a larger Forum. HLDRC has taken a proactive leadership role in bringing the various individual scholars and community leaders,

elected members, government retired officers, church institutions, NGOs, Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to build a larger platform to address these issues. On 24th May such initiatives have been initiated to hold a focused group of about 25 key leaders of Terai unit with **Prof. Verginius Xaxa** who has a wide ranges of academic experiences like Deputy Director of TISS Guwahati, Prof. at Tejpur Central University and working at Institute of Human Development New Delhi and several other important assignments at nationally. **Fr. Lalit Tirkey S,J** presently the Principal of North Bengal St. Xavier's College, Rajgunj and. **Dr. Prof. John Berchmans Tirkey**, presently Head of the Department of Sociology & teaching in Kalipada Ghose College Bagdogra were resource persons who shared their valuable experiences with suggestions to take this important task for the community.

LABOUR RIGHTS PUBLICATION

Labour Rights on Tea garden workers land rights part-II is under publication to strengthen the knowledge and generate awareness on the rights on land where they are living for more than three generations. This publication is creating awareness and confidence among the tea plantation community in North Bengal.

STUDY CENTRES



As there has been so much destruction in education system in our country/ region due to Covid 19 pandemic wave I & II. There is still a great challenge to restore a normal situation of education for the poor children in tea gardens. A small initiative but focused on the increasing school drop outs among the tribal tea workers children where HLDRC provided an alternative in keeping the students together by forming study centres in tea garden Labour lines. **Canadian Jesuits International (CJI)** is supporting in 14 Study centres where students from class I to X and few centres where class XI students are also getting educational support

ENVIRONMENT DAY 2022

Like every year, this time we celebrated World Environment Day with great enthusiasm. A rally was done by us at 28 places along with the children to plant trees and to bring awareness about the environment among the people. All the children together planted about 500 trees and saplings. This year we had the theme "Save Trees Save Life".



ANTI HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MIGRATION ISSUES IN NORTH BENGAL SUPPORTED BY JESUIT MISSIONS UK



ANTI HUMAN TRAFFICKING DRIVE

There has been a significant increased rate of human trafficking during the post Covid period. The reasons are many however, looking for jobs in cities after two years of devastating impact of Covid19 on employment sector that has made very vulnerable to young boys and girls. In general there is a job crisis globally at all times but Covid 19 pandemic has given a very different twist where millions of workers returned home as their employment establishments were shut down for long time. Now no longer they can stay at home without earning. They are looking for any kinds of works to survive locally or nationally. The flesh traders are using this vulnerability as great opportunity to trap them while they are searching for jobs.

Nursing Training at Dondajhar- 10 students have completed GDA course at Navajeevan Nursing Institute, Dondajhar. They will be placed soon in different hospitals locally and nationally.

issues are discussed and initiatives are taken to resolve those issues. Right now the advocacy works at government office on the problem on the digital ration card is going on through village community leaders. Currently the Antodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) card holders are deprived of 35 kg ration per household. The same families are given much lower ration @5kg per members with another card of Special Priority Household (SPHH) and RKSU-I with much lesser amount. The awareness programs on this issue have been carried out in several tea gardens. A regular community level meeting is conducted to participate actively in Gram Sabha, Gram Sansad meeting. So that they can know every plan they get from the Panchayat. Gungaram Lievens Nagar, Muni Bara Line and several other places there is drinking water problems. People organized themselves and issues were brought to the Gram Sabha. Now there is a water reservoir tank built by the government of West Bengal. The huge tank has been made. Now people will not have drinking water problem. This is a collective effort and more People should work by coming together so that we can enable people to become active and make people be able to provide social security.

UNITED FORUM FOR AADIVASI RIGHTS (UFFAR) DEALING ATROCITIES CASE



Mr. Claber Toppo aged about 49 years resident of Nandavita Pahargumia Tea Estate under Phansidewa Block district Darjeeling, Oraon by caste, listed as Schedule was harassed and physically assaulted on 23rd April 2022 by Prem Kumar Sharma senior manager Pahargumiah tea estate along with Anjan Karan in-charge of Nandavita Tea Garden.

Claber Toppo has a 6 Bighas of land under his possession since the time of his ancestors. Both the manager suddenly arrived at Claber land and destroys the crops and physically assaulted him, using slang language and gave him life threatening along with that they also abused him in the name of Adivasi as lower caste

and Jungli Adivasi. These particular incidents got viral on social media as a wild fire on 23rd April 2022.

United Forum for Adivasi Rights (UFFAR) giving utmost priority to this sensitive issue immediately reported to the incident and held a meeting and decided to file a FIR under SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) ACT 1989, against the Tea Garden Manger.

On 28th April FIR was lodge against the tea garden manager in response the manager also applied for an Anticipatory bail in the court. Based on the above registered case under atrocity Act, high court gave a notice to the eye witness to be present before the magistrate on 06th of May 2022 to give her statement. The accused for his anticipatory bail was noticed to be present before the magistrate on 10th of May 2022, where Magistrate after Judging, accused was found guilty and his anticipatory bail was rejected.

Now at the present situation the case is under process to file a charge Sheet against the accused Tea Garden Manager Prem Kumar Sharma.



ADIVASI RIGHTS Consultative meeting



Adivasi Rights discussion under North Bengal Youth Association-Terai Unit



Human Life Development & Research Centre (HLDRC) staff 2022

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