

# Activity Report

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## **CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICE SOCIETY**

**2023-24**



**Catholic Social Service Society of J&K**  
SEVANIKETAN, Kunjwani Bypass, P.O. Gangyal, Jammu 180010, J&K, India

## **Major Activities of the year 2023-24**

### **1. Establishment of smart skill development center (SSDC) at Akalpur**

In Akalpur Unit, we have introduced the Smart Skill Development Centre (SSDC) as part of the "Augmentation of Livelihood and Entrepreneurship training through Smart Skill Development Centre in 24 villages of Jammu District" project. Operational since October 2023, the SSDC offers free short-term skill training courses to the youth of 10 villages in the Akalpur area, complemented by a complimentary computer course leading to certification.

The centre aims to empower villagers through various services. It provides free computer education for farmers and village students, social media awareness, and email communication training. Additionally, it offers training on "How to use Smart Phones" for day-to-day work, a Common Service Centre facility for all villagers, and career counselling for unemployed individuals. The SSDC also conducts training sessions on "How to use Smart Gaon App" and features interactive video lectures by experts for farmers and students. Furthermore, the centre hosts awareness sessions about Government Schemes and Policies.

More than just a training centre, the SSDC embodies a hub of learning, innovation, and empowerment. Anticipated to positively impact the socio-economic status of villagers, particularly women and youth, the centre fosters a sense of community and solidarity, showcasing the transformative potential of smart skill development in rural areas.

At present, we are running one batch of 22 students at SSDC during evening and daytime, it is used by nearby people to learn and explore internet related skills. From next month, one more batch is going to start in the evening.

### **2. Skill Training Programme**

During the last one year, we have diligently conducted comprehensive courses on cutting & tailoring and Beauty culture. These courses were specifically designed with the aim of motivating, skilling, and fostering self-dependence among young women who are unskilled and predominantly dropouts from high schools. The curriculum was carefully curated to ensure a blend of theoretical knowledge and practical skills, essential for their empowerment in these fields.

After an intensive six-month course, marked by their unwavering dedication and hard work, the participants were proudly awarded certificates of completion on International Women's Day 2024. We are elated to report that most of the candidates excelled in their respective courses. Notably, 5 of these talented individuals have successfully launched their own beauty salons, thereby actualizing their dreams of entrepreneurship.

They unanimously attribute their success and financial empowerment to the organization's support and guidance. This accomplishment not only signifies their

personal growth but also serves as a testament to our commitment to nurturing talent and enabling economic independence among young women.

### **3. Orientation and capacity building Programme for SHGs on digitalization**

We have successfully executed 20 orientation programs for Self-Help Groups (SHGs) focusing on the critical importance and necessity of digitalizing SHG accounts and their federations. These educational sessions were instrumental in enlightening SHG members about the concept of digitalization, particularly its role in augmenting transparency within group account management and register maintenance. The curriculum of the orientation program was comprehensive, encompassing both newly established and longstanding SHGs operating within our target regions, as well as their federations.

### **4. Formation and strengthening of Community Based Groups (CBGs)**

Community-based organizations (CBOs) serve as a crucial fulcrum for tackling issues aimed at enhancing the well-being of individuals within society. This approach has catalyzed the formation of numerous grassroots entities, particularly among women and agricultural workers, who are instrumental in driving developmental initiatives towards meaningful change. In our efforts to fortify existing Community-Based Groups (CBGs) and to establish new ones, we have executed 62 orientation programs across various targeted villages.

### **5. Medical camps**

In the last one year, our team has diligently organized two medical checkup camps, with one being specifically dedicated to ladies within the target villages of Bishnah Area in collaboration with Block Medical Hospital. A total of 365 individuals registered for a General Health checkup, receiving comprehensive care and free medication. The prevalent health concerns among adults included pain, gastrointestinal issues, allergies, and general weakness, which were managed symptomatically. Additionally, we conducted thorough screenings for hypertension, ensuring follow-up for those previously diagnosed while referring new cases with significant findings or non-compliance to existing treatments to specialized centers for advanced care. Vision impairments and other ophthalmological conditions were also evaluated, with referrals made to appropriate departments for further examination.

### **6. Celebration of International Women's Day 2024**

At Akalpur Unit, International Women's Day was a momentous event, themed 'Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress.' The celebration saw an impressive turnout, with over 150 women from various villages in attendance. These gatherings are pivotal for sharing opinions and thoughts on financial empowerment and the status of

women. It was an opportunity for women to voice their experiences and aspirations. The event also underscored the importance of digital empowerment for women, which stands as a cornerstone for development in today's world. Resource persons played a key role in facilitating this digital journey, emphasizing its necessity in the modern era.

## **7. Health Awareness Programmes on Menstrual Hygiene and Nutritional requirements**

During the comprehensive health and nutrition programme, women were educated on the essential nutritional requirements necessary for maintaining a healthy body. Recognizing that women often play a pivotal role in managing household chores, the programme emphasized the importance of not neglecting their own health needs, which is a common cause of the widespread poor health status among women. The sessions provided in-depth information on body requirements, focusing on dietary needs and menstrual hygiene management. Additionally, to support their health, women were given free sanitary napkins and iron supplements to address common deficiencies. A total of 11 such programmes conducted in the last eight months.

## **8. Awareness on Digital Learning and Government schemes**

During the year, we conducted 11 awareness programs in target villages on Digital Learning and government schemes. The program aimed to provide information on digital platforms such as 'ePathshala', 'Swayam', and 'Digital India' that are operational within the government system. These platforms feature user-friendly interfaces that facilitate easy access to resources and benefits from government departments. The program offered detailed awareness of these specific government digital platforms, highlighting their intuitive navigation and accessibility, which offer numerous services for impoverished individuals and employment opportunities.

## **9. Skilling of SHGs on Agri and Non-Agriculture activities**

We have conducted 25 comprehensive training programmes focusing on account keeping, enhancing skills in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, and ensuring livelihood security. These programmes were meticulously designed to facilitate the establishment of small business avenues for families associated with us through Self-Help Groups (SHGs). In addition to technical skills, we emphasized the importance of social mobilization and collective agency. We provided a platform for women to gain essential skills and build self-confidence, empowering them to overcome existing disparities and barriers. Our sessions included interactive workshops, real-life case studies, and motivational talks to inspire active participation and long-term commitment to personal and community growth. The main trades for trainings were marigold farming, mushroom cultivation, food processing, millet production, vegetable cultivation, bee keeping etc.

## **10.Rebuilding capacity for small and marginal farmers**

We organized 28 training programmes for farmers on vegetable cultivation, organic farming, mushroom cultivation, soil testing and fertility, horticulture, floriculture, traditional manures etc. During the programme, trainees were educated about the selected topics and along with that, they were motivated for use of vermicompost, bio-fertilizers and organic fungicides and organic pesticides in vegetables. Farmers were also trained in proper spacing and the requirement of irrigation in the vegetables. They were also suggested that they should use only well decomposed manures in their vegetable fields so that they can get healthy crop and keep their soil healthy.

## **11.Inputs on livestock Management**

Throughout the year, we successfully conducted 10 livestock management input sessions aimed at empowering farmers with essential knowledge and skills. During these interactive programmes, participants were meticulously educated on a variety of crucial topics including Animal feeding and nutrition strategies for optimal livestock growth, General husbandry practices to enhance farm productivity, Identification and management of Common health problems encountered on farms, the importance and methods of Deworming in cattle for maintaining herd health, as well as the critical procedures for Immunization and vaccination to prevent outbreaks of diseases. Additionally, we provided valuable insights into livestock insurance policies to safeguard farmers' investments.

## **12.Promotion of Mushroom Development**

We selected 53 poorest family for mushroom unit activity. Selection process of the beneficiaries started very early as soon the project started. Final selected beneficiaries underwent one month training on mushroom cultivation at Krishi Vigyan Kendra, R.S. Pura in collaboration with SKAUST. During the training programme, they learnt the entire process of composting, spawning, turning, casing, maintenance of the crop and harvesting. After the successful completion of the course, they were given mushroom bags filled with ready compost and with casing as per the available spaces at their respective houses or farms in the first and second year of the project. One bag produced 2 to 3 kgs of mushroom which gave 3000 to 20000 INR profit to the family as per the number of bags kept for produce. This year also in the month of Oct and Nov, we are planning to give mushroom bags to another 16 poorest families.

## **13.Strategic building workshop**

We had 4 workshops at R.S.Pura in which a diverse group convened to exchange knowledge and strategize on project implementation and future actions. Discussions covered community development, participation, governance, leadership, and management, alongside practical skill-building in facilitation, goal-setting, planning, and monitoring. Feedback from farmers and SHG members highlighted active

engagement and positive reception of income-generating activities like mushroom cultivation and marigold farming, with a call for expansion to other villages.

#### **14. Risk Communication and Community Engagement**

Under this programme, we have selected 18 volunteers who are engaged in awareness building on COVID-19 and other health issues in community and to ensure that authentic and updated information and advice are shared with the communities, mitigating the rumors, with the support of the frontline volunteers. They are augmenting, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquettes among public as a routine/regular practice against everyday respiratory illness/respiratory tract infections Widespread Community Transmission.

#### **15. Participatory Knowledge Centres (PKCs)**

The implementation of Participatory Knowledge Centres (PKCs) in the 15 target villages has had a profound impact on the intended goals. These centres have served as nurturing grounds for children, going beyond academic improvement. They have played a pivotal role in instilling a sense of active participation and self-assurance in the children. These centres cater to the educational needs of 225 children.

#### **16. Capacity building of Teachers**

The main objective of the program was to capacitate the Instructors of Participatory Knowledge Centres (PKCs) on thematic learning and inclusive education. To achieve this objective, the training programs are being organized and experts with experience in the relevant fields are being approached. The trainers share various techniques and methods of thematic learning with the participants and also discuss different ways to engage with the children during group work sessions. In addition, many new techniques of teaching were inculcated among the teachers through the role play sessions to make the training more interactive and engaging.

#### **17. Formation and strengthening of Neighbourhood Children Parliament**

In Nagrota area, there are currently four functional Neighbourhood Children Parliaments (NCP). These parliaments serve as platforms for children to come together and address the challenges they face within their community. Regular meetings are held to engage the children in understanding child development and community issue that impact society as a whole. Recognizing that children are integral to society, efforts have been made to ensure they are aware of their rights and provisions as guaranteed by the Indian Constitution. The NCP enables children to identify social issues and work towards practical solutions, promoting both personal growth and community development.

## **18. Capacity building-NCP leaders**

The program aimed to provide members with technical knowledge on child rights and different levels of participation. Through a brief introduction, participants expressed their expectations, setting the stage for an engaging session. The expert then discussed child rights and the significance of active involvement. Steps to ensure greater participation were explored, emphasizing safe spaces, inclusivity, and responsibility. Individual tasks encouraged reflection and group sharing. The program sought to empower participants to advocate for child rights and contribute to personal growth and community well-being.

## **19. Capacity building for ASHA and ICDS workers**

The programs were designed to equip participants with knowledge and skills related to inclusive education, child development, and community participation. The sessions commenced with a brief introduction by the participants. Following this, the Resource person engaged the participants in a discussion about their expectations from the program. They were also encouraged to briefly share their roles as ASHA and ICDS workers, highlighting how they ensure community participation in their programs. Subsequently, sessions focused on the basic concepts of ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) were conducted and shared with the participants. This included discussions on the main criteria for establishing centres and strategies for ensuring the participation of the broader community, particularly key individuals, to effectively implement the program.

## **20. Installation of low-cost hand washing station**

Low-cost hand washing units were installed in three different locations within the project area. Following a series of meetings and consultations with elected members and key stakeholders, the locations were finalized, and installations were completed. These units have greatly benefited the people of the target population, providing them with convenient access to essential hygiene facilities.

## **21. Accelerated Learning Centres**

With the objective of extending additional support to marginalized children to sustain their school education and facilitate their holistic development, 15 Accelerated Learning Centres have been established in the target villages of Nagrota block. These centres cater to the needs of 250 children in the primary school age group. In addition to academic assistance, the centres host a variety of healthy competitions among students to promote extracurricular activities and foster a sense of collective action among them.

## **22. Capacity building of Teachers on Inclusive education**

The main objective of the program was to capacitate the Instructors of Accelerated Learning Centres (ALCs) on thematic learning and inclusive education. To achieve this objective, the training programs are being organized and experts with experience in the relevant fields are being approached. The trainers share various techniques and methods of thematic learning with the participants and also discuss different ways to engage with the children during group work sessions. In addition, many new techniques of teaching were inculcated among the teachers through the role play sessions to make the training more interactive and engaging.

## **23. Formation and Strengthening of SHG Federation**

The existing SHGs have been continuously developed network with the neighbouring SHGs and unanimously felt the need to federate the groups and cater to the need of the member groups. With this intention series of meetings with the representatives of the Self-Help Groups (SHGs) were organized to discuss the structure and functioning of the federation. The program aimed to educate the members about the benefits of the federation and its role in making the SHGs sustainable. The objective was also to encourage the members to actively participate in the federation and contribute towards its formation and strengthening.

## **24. Workshop on entrepreneurship development**

The workshop on entrepreneurship development emerged as a transformative initiative, strategically designed to catalyze economic empowerment and sustainable growth. It kicked off with a comprehensive overview, underlining the pivotal role of entrepreneurship within rural settings. The emphasis was on its potential to ignite job creation, bolster local economies, and catalyse holistic community development. Participants, harbouring ambitions to launch their enterprises, actively engaged in dynamic discussions and hands-on sessions, guided by seasoned facilitators. The workshop traversed a broad spectrum of subjects, ranging from conceiving business ideas to conducting feasibility analyses, mastering financial management, and deploying effective marketing strategies specifically tailored for rural enterprises.

## **25. Skill development programme on Cutting & Tailoring and Plumbing**

Skill Development programme organized for 105 young girls based on the assessment aspirations, present skill sets and marketability of skills. The six months course concluded for 2 centres in Khaleni, Doda, 1 Centre in Batote areas and 2 in Nadore and Jagti panchayats. The centres on cutting and tailoring ensured proper theoretical and practical inputs to the candidates. Regular monitoring visits were organized, internal evaluations were also conducted. Apart from regular inputs, various programmes were also arranged to provide proper knowledge and



guidance to the candidates on entrepreneurship development, client management financial inclusion etc, 3 Plumbing Centres were also functional in 3 target villages.

## **26. Formation & Strengthening of Panchayat Level Forum (PLF)**

The formation and fortification of Panchayat-level forum meetings emerged as crucial pillars in fostering grassroots democracy and citizen empowerment. These gatherings served as dynamic platforms where community members converged to deliberate on pertinent issues, exchange insights, and collectively strategize for community development. In particular, recent initiatives focused on enhancing participants' understanding of the Right to Information Act, equipping them with the necessary knowledge and tools to navigate its provisions effectively. Through engaging workshops and interactive sessions, attendees were empowered to comprehend their rights under the Act and adeptly navigate the process of drafting applications to access essential information, thereby fostering transparency and accountability at the local level.

## **27. Awareness on livelihood schemes**

The awareness program on livelihood schemes were conducted to empower and inform the target people about opportunities available to them. The session began with a thorough presentation outlining a variety of government and non-governmental livelihood schemes specifically tailored for rural development. This presentation covered a range of topics, including various types of schemes, their objectives, eligibility criteria, application procedures, and the potential benefits participants could expect to receive. The primary objective of this presentation was to equip community members with the knowledge necessary to understand and take advantage of the available livelihood opportunities.

## **28. Remedial Centres**

The remedial centres were established in response to the unique educational challenges faced by migrant children, including language barriers, gaps in prior learning, and limited access to quality education. These centres aim to provide targeted educational support to bridge these gaps and ensure that migrant children have access to knowledge-based education. 6 remedial centres are functional catering to the educational need of 105 children in the target locations.

## **29. Creative Workshop for Children**

Creative workshops were organized for children with the aim of fostering their understanding of child development and thematic exploration. The workshop provided a platform for interactive learning and creative expression, encouraging children to explore various themes through art, storytelling, and group activities. Children were captivated by interactive storytelling sessions that explored themes such as friendship, empathy, resilience, and diversity. Through imaginative

narratives, children were encouraged to reflect on the values and lessons embedded in each story.

### **30. Volunteers Training**

In a proactive initiative, members of the migrant community have undergone health volunteer training. This training equips them with essential skills and knowledge to address the healthcare needs of their fellow migrants. These volunteers play a crucial role in bridging healthcare gaps, promoting health awareness, and facilitating better access to healthcare services within the migrant community. These trained volunteers are now better equipped to address various needs, including healthcare, education, and social integration, among the migrant population.

### **31. Health awareness programme**

The Health Awareness Programmes were organized in the target villages to educate the community, particularly the women, about the importance of preventing the spread of the Corona virus and other health diseases. The main objective of the program was to discuss health problems commonly prevalent in rural areas and the importance of preventive measures to control their spread.

### **32. Medical Check-up Camps**

During the reporting period 11 Medical check-up camps were organized in 11 different panchayats for Migrant community. Around 467 benefitted from these camps. These camps were organized with the support from the St. Joseph's Community Hospital. With the active participation of Key persons and the volunteers these camps were successfully organized.

### **33. Livelihood Support Programme**

Recognizing the economic vulnerabilities faced by migrant families, we offered partial support for livelihood activities to the most vulnerable households. Our aim was to enhance the economic resilience of migrant communities and reduce dependence on external assistance. We supported 8 members from the migrant population to enhance the income of the vulnerable population from the 6 locations. The vulnerable migrants were supported with the following:

- 6 Motorised Stitching Machines
- Fast food Stall Rehri
- 4 Manual Interlock Machines
- 3 Sets of Fast-Food Utensils
- 1 Bush Cutter
- 1 Lawn Mower

## **PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES**

1. A group of 22 Progressive farmers from R.S. Pura area participated in one programme at KVK3 Jammu on 18th May 2023 organized by **National Horticulture Board (NHB)**. NHB. It is a government agency that promotes the development of horticulture in India. The NHB has a regional office in Jammu, which covers the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Haryana. The NHB provides various schemes and services to the horticulture sector, such as credit subsidy, market development, quality certification, technology dissemination and training. The NHB also supports the establishment of cold storage facilities, processing units, nurseries, and demonstration farms in the region.
2. A group of 27 Farmers from R.S. Pura area participated in training programme on Establishment and Popularization of **densified functional feed technology** to develop entrepreneur and small scale self-sustainable business by the Department of Veterinary Science, SKAUST, R.S. Pura from 8th to 13th Oct 2023. The DFFT training programme is designed to equip farmers with the skills and knowledge to produce and market their own densified functional feed using the DFFT machine. The DFFT training programme aims to promote entrepreneurship among farmers by enabling them to create their own value-added feed products and generate additional income. The programme also contributes to the sustainable development of the livestock sector by reducing feed costs, improving feed efficiency, and minimizing environmental impacts.
3. Around 35 Progressive farmers from R.S. Pura area participated in **Holistic Agriculture Development Plan (HADP)** at KVK Jammu on 15th Nov 2023. The Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP), initiated by the Agriculture Production Department of Jammu and Kashmir, is a comprehensive endeavor aimed at transforming the agricultural landscape in the region. It encompasses twenty-nine dynamic projects that span various facets of agriculture, including horticulture, crop cultivation, and livestock husbandry. These projects are strategically designed to unlock the exciting potential of Jammu and Kashmir's agricultural sector.
4. **The Bharat Sankalp Yatra**, held from 27th November to 16th December, was a significant event that brought together 350 farmers and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) from the R.S. Pura area. This initiative was in collaboration with the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKAUST) and Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK). It aimed to foster knowledge exchange, enhance agricultural practices, and strengthen community ties. Participants engaged in various workshops and demonstrations that showcased advanced agricultural techniques and sustainable farming practices, contributing to the overall goal of rural empowerment and agricultural prosperity.

5. On 6th January 2024, 28 farmers participated in a district level event on **commercial floriculture at SKAUST, Jammu**. The event was a significant gathering aimed at promoting and educating local farmers about the benefits and techniques of commercial floriculture. Experts from various fields were invited to share their knowledge and insights on the latest trends, cultivation practices, and marketing strategies in the floriculture industry. The participating farmers were provided with hands-on training sessions, where they learned about soil preparation, plant selection, pest management, and post-harvest handling. The event also included a discussion forum for farmers to exchange ideas and address challenges faced in commercial floriculture. Overall, the event was a step towards enhancing the agricultural landscape of the district by introducing innovative and sustainable farming practices.
6. On 15th February 2024, a significant gathering of 32 farmers from the R.S.Pura area was witnessed at the farmers meet. This event, organized by **the Directorate of Ayush on Medicinal Plants**, took place at KVK Jammu. It served as a platform for these agriculturists to engage in insightful discussions on the cultivation and benefits of medicinal plants, aiming to enhance their knowledge and practices in this field.
7. On 10th March 2024, an event of significant importance for the agricultural community took place at the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) in Jammu. The **PASHU DHAN MELA**, a prominent livestock fair, saw enthusiastic participation from farmers across the region. This gathering was not just a showcase of livestock but also a platform for exchange of knowledge and experiences among the farming fraternity. Experts from various fields of agriculture were present to provide insights and guidance on best practices for livestock management, health, and productivity. The fair also facilitated a marketplace for farmers to buy, sell, and trade animals, thus contributing to the economic vitality of the rural economy. Such events are pivotal in strengthening the agricultural sector by fostering community engagement, promoting sustainable farming methods, and supporting the livelihoods of farmers.
8. On the 12th and 13th of March 2024, a group of 35 farmers engaged in a significant endeavor to enhance their market presence through the **Branding and Packaging of Agriculture project**. This initiative, held under the auspices of the HADP at SKAUST, Jammu, was a concerted effort to elevate the standard of agricultural products by introducing sophisticated branding and packaging strategies. The workshop aimed to empower farmers with the knowledge and tools necessary to create compelling brand identities and packaging designs that resonate with consumers, thereby increasing the perceived value of their products. This event marks a pivotal step in transforming agricultural marketing and ensuring that local farmers can compete effectively in the modern marketplace.

9. On 20th March, 23 farmers participated in Dhingri training programme at SKAUST Jammu. The comprehensive session aimed to educate and empower the local agricultural community on the cultivation and benefits of Dhingri mushrooms. Experts from the university's horticulture department facilitated the workshop, providing insights into modern farming techniques, soil nutrition, and sustainable practices tailored for Dhingri mushroom production. The programme also included practical demonstrations and interactive Q&A sessions to address specific queries from the participants. This initiative is part of SKAUST Jammu's ongoing commitment to enhancing agricultural productivity and livelihoods in the region.