

## Jagadishpur begins ‘Healthy Village through Healthy Habits’ initiative



Jagadishpur Gram Panchayat (GP) in Bali Jagacha Block of Howrah District in West Bengal has launched a cleanliness programme to make the GP area clean and at the same time keep local people healthy during this pandemic situation. The initiative carried out with technical support from Aamra Susama Jalapapat (ASJ) facilitates sustainable behaviour change and promotes safe sanitation practices.

The key objective of this special initiative is to create healthy villages by motivating people to adopt healthy and hygienic habits on a sustainable basis. Towards this, all efforts will be made to involve people from all the households, institutions, markets of the GP in this initiative.



It will include activities such as interpersonal communication, habitation level meetings (Para Baithak), wall writings, distribution of IEC materials, awareness camps, etc. to facilitate community participation and achieve programme objectives.

**Inauguration:** The initiative was inaugurated on October 2, 2020 by Minister-in-Charge of Forest department (West Bengal), Shri Banerjee in the presence of special guests i.e – District Magistrate of Howrah, Smt. Mukta Arya, SDO (Howrah-Sadar), Officer-in-Charge (Health), Sabhapati and Sahakari Sabhapati- Baly Jagacha Block, BDO (Baly Jagacha), and Joint BDO.

Others present on the occasion were Pradhan and Up-Pradhan Jagadishpur GP, social activist - Tapas Maity, Working President of Aamra Susama Jalaprapat Smt. Maya Sarkar Das, CEO-Aamra Susama Jalaprapat-Shri Prasun Kanti Das, ASJ's team members along with around 200 community volunteers.



**Capacity Building:** At the outset, a two-day training cum workshop was organised on 25-26 September 2020 for 20 GP level trained resource persons from 18 Gram Sansads to equip them to implement the initiative. During the training, various anecdotes and everyday instances were used to demonstrate

how behaviour change in aspects such as regular use of toilet, handwashing after toilet use and before and after every meal, use of mask and sanitizer and physical distancing can have a positive impact on family and community health. It was reiterated that the adoption of such practices can improve the socio-economic condition of a family.

A sample survey was conducted by the trainee volunteers to understand existing behaviour of a few sample households on Day 2 of the workshop. The follow-up discussion demonstrated good practices along with habits that need to be changed. Volunteers also tried their hands in developing catchy slogans and jingles which they can use to spread awareness among the masses on health and hygiene.

Thereafter, a pool of 20 resource persons and 180 community volunteers were identified from all the 18 Gram Sansads of the GP. They were oriented about the initiative during a workshop held on 29th September 2020.

#### **Expected outcome of the initiative:**

- Regular and sustained use of toilets by every household
- Adoption of the habit of washing hands before and after meals and after using the toilet
- Put an end to the habit of littering
- Clean homes and surroundings
- Reduction in use of plastic
- Observance of healthy menstrual practices
- Visible improvement in cleanliness in schools and Anganwadi Centres
- Visible improvement in cleanliness in markets and Haats



- Community will become healthy through adoption of healthy habits

The initiative which is a part of ODF Plus activity in the second phase of Mission Nirmal Bangla is certainly timely, given the current pandemic. It will also help the district sustain the gains made during Phase I of SBM-G.