



banglanatak dot com

Making Change using Culture as a Tool



Culture & Development



Culture & HIV/AIDS



Culture & Health



Culture & Human Rights



Culture & Livelihood

banglanatak dot com is a social enterprise working at grass roots across India since 2000. The organization works with the following objectives (a) fostering pro-poor growth; (b) protecting rights of women, children and indigenous people and (c) promoting culture for employment, inclusion and growth.

Using Culture for Development :

We use Theatre in Development based approaches for social inclusion, education and skill empowerment of communities. Theatre is used to educate people on diverse social issues, mobilise community led action, life skill development and participatory research.

Theatre based communication programs physically reach out to people to build their awareness on Health & Hygiene, HIV/AIDS, Gender & Child Rights, importance of Biosphere Conservation, Energy Conservation, impact of Climate Change & menaces like Human Trafficking.

Awards :

- **"Civil Society Award 2006"** for outstanding contribution in HIV/AIDS Communication using Art & Culture. This is a National Award, given by UNAIDS, National AIDS Control Organisation and SAATHI.
- **"UNFPA-LAADLI Media Award,2007"** for best Community Theatre Project in Eastern India.

Using Culture for Livelihood :

Our vision is to synergise cultural and economic development leading to sustainable development of marginalised communities as well as preservation of their cultural heritage and diversity. We use intangible cultural heritage to create livelihood opportunities and build up livelihood assets.

UNESCO has accredited us for providing Advisory Services to its Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee (2010).

Team :

Amitava Bhattacharya, Founder Director of banglanatak dot com, is an engineering graduate from IIT, Kharagpur (1989) and a Chevening Gurukul Scholar in Leadership and Excellence from the London School of Economics (2008). Amitava has innovated models for theatre based communication on social issues and promoting rural creative industries based on traditional performing arts. His special area of interest is promoting social entrepreneurship in India.

Ananya Bhattacharya, Vice President and Director, is an Electrical engineer from Jadavpur University (1989), Kolkata and a Commonwealth Scholar with Masters in Sustainable Development from Staffordshire University, UK (2010). Gender, Culture and Development and Sustainability are Ananya's key areas of work. Ananya has presented papers on ICH at India, Thailand and Portugal. She heads the project management team at banglanatak dot com.

Ranjan Sen, Editor and Director, heads the Creative Group. He is a journalist with over 30 years of experience in diverse media. Ranjan's research findings have been documented in films on varied topics like prison life, folk festivals in tribal areas, lifestyle, election, theatre, corporate documentary on micro credit organization etc. He is a regular post-edit and cover story writer on contemporary socio-cultural scenario in different Bengali dailies.

Sayantani Raychaudhuri, General Manager, Business Development is a Masters in Hindi literature from Presidency College Kolkata. Sayantani has twelve years of experience in theatre based communication on health and gender issues across India. Sayantani has presented paper and talks on ICH at India, UK, France & Thailand. Sayantani has worked on gender issues at West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and U.P.

Niloy Basu, Senior Manager, is a Commonwealth Scholar with post graduate qualification in Sustainable Development (Staffordshire University, UK). Niloy heads the Operations Group. Niloy has fifteen years of experience in developmental research and theatre based communication projects on gender issues and child protection across the country. Niloy has attended International Intensive Course on Intangible Cultural Heritage at ICHCAP, Korea.

Madhura Dutta, Resident Manager, Delhi, is a Masters in Sociology from Calcutta University and in Sustainable Development from Staffordshire University, U.K. Madhura is a PhD Scholar at TISS. She has nine years of experience in development research and Project Management. Madhura has worked with children and women at West Bengal, Bihar, Delhi, Rajasthan and Goa.

Siddhanjan Raychaudhuri, is a Civil Engineer and a scholar in Rural Development has nine years of work experience. Siddhanjan is a senior manager at banglanatak and plays a key role in promoting creative enterprise based on ICH. Siddhanjan has worked with youth at West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Rajasthan and Bihar.



Protecting the rights of children



Protecting Children from Abuse & Violence

Prevention of violence against women and children is a key focus of our work. We are working at Bihar, West Bengal and Jharkhand for prevention of child trafficking for labour. Our project covering eight districts across the three states is supported by the Global Fund for Prevention of Trafficking in Person (G/TIP). We are also developing a Youth Network in West Bengal for prevention of child marriage with support of Unicef.



Awareness Campaigns

We use theatre as a vehicle for community mobilization. Local theatre groups, folk artists and community based groups are trained in building awareness on rights, opportunities, pitfalls of child marriage and crimes like human trafficking using street theatre shows. The street theatre shows by the local artists in local dialect easily create a sense of identity, and community trust building and acceptance is achieved in the process of intervention. Drama creates 'real' environment for educating people. Men and women, irrespective of their level of education or awareness can easily understand the visual portrayal of issues and messages.



Empowering Children

Our strategy is to empower children, women and youth with knowledge of their rights and opportunities and laws for their protection. We have held workshops with children in child labour schools at West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand, Shishu Shiksha Kendras in West Bengal and also out of school children. The Children Groups have become proactive in building awareness among their peers using posters, theatre, poems and songs.



Mobilising Community led Vigilance

We are developing village based safety nets for protection of children and women. We are holding meetings with vulnerable families to sensitise them on ways and means used by traffickers. Villagers have come forward to form action groups vigilant against trafficking and working to facilitate safe migration.



Strengthening Communication at Grassroot

To strengthen grassroot communication mechanism we are training Anganwadi workers in all three states on communicating the importance of reporting information on missing children to the police, checking credentials of prospective bridegrooms and job providers.



Multi-stakeholder Partnerships

To combat child abuse and child trafficking we are organizing networking workshops for facilitating collaboration between district and block administration, community based action groups and children groups. The goal is to strengthen grassroot intelligence on vulnerable families and also perpetrators of crime.





Ending violence against women & children

Strengthening Law Enforcement for stopping Human Trafficking

We have innovated unique training methodology using theatre based activities for empowering police officers with knowledge, skills and attitude to become proactive in stopping human trafficking.

UNODC supported Contact Base in organizing training workshops across all police stations in West Bengal between 2006 and 2008. Sanlaap, SLARTC and Police Training College, Barrackpore were our partners. A total of 81 workshops were held in 2006 with Investigating Officials and Supporting Officials covering 126 police stations across 11 districts of West Bengal and Kolkata in 2006. 23 workshops with supporting officials were held across 11 districts of West Bengal in the second phase in 2007. In 2008 23 workshops were held across 16 districts of West Bengal. More than 3000 police personnel were trained. Besides improving awareness on different dimensions of trafficking, laws for prosecution and conviction of crime, rescue and post rescue procedures, the workshops also sensitised the officials on human rights perspectives, gender issues and mental health aspects of survivors.

UNODC used our methodology in training key police officials in different zones of India (Guwahati, Phillaur, Pune) and SAARC Countries (2009). UNODC has documented our campaign & training methodologies as best practices in 'Compendium of Best Practices on Anti Human Trafficking by NGOs'.

Using Theatre for Participatory Research

We use forum theatre, invisible theatre and interactive theatre to research with community participation. The theatre shows help to reach out at random to large groups of audiences and thus scores over conventional research where achieving a representative sample from community often becomes a challenge. A public platform for discussion and dialogue is created as theatre helps to overcome barriers like shyness, fear and reticence to respond to questions. Theatre based research is extremely effective for researching issues related to children, women and marginalized communities. We have used this approach to research factors leading to proliferation of violence against women and children

Reducing vulnerability to Sex Tourism and Trafficking at Goa

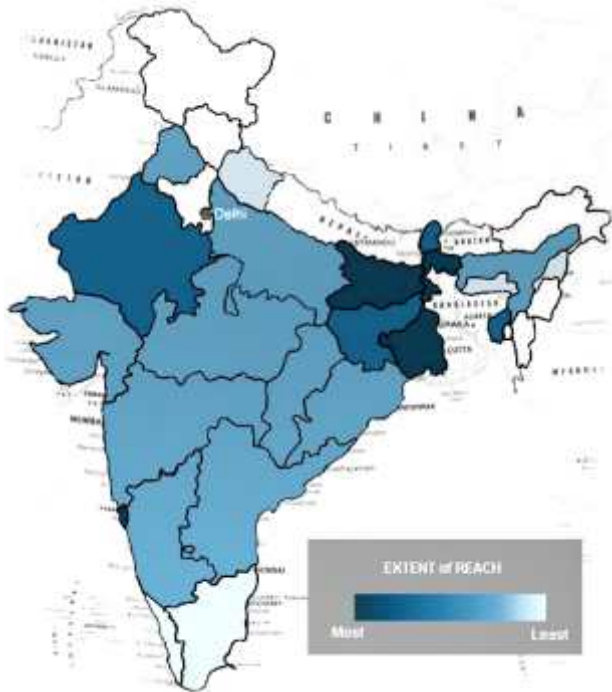
Paedophilia and sex tourism are unfortunate realities at Goa resulting in trafficking of children from neighbouring states. Participatory research using innovative approaches like interactive theatre in 2005 by us revealed that children are sexually abused, made to pose for pornographic films often in lieu of affectionate gestures and gifts like toys and chocolates. It also showed that there is a denial among Goan residents citing the issue as a problem of migrant families coming in during the tourist season between October and March, while their own children were vulnerable owing to common practices of hiring out rooms for months to tourists, allowing visitors in schools and letting them accompany the children for boat rides etc. Gendered marketing strategies, disintegration of local value systems, lure for quick money have aggravated the situation.

We addressed the issue of denial by using street theatres for depicting prevailing situation and building understanding on how children are at risk. To mobilise community led response, sensitisation and networking workshops were held with diverse stakeholders in protection of children ranging from grass root health workers, NGO outreach workers and teachers at beach centres, parish women to tourist police and legal aid cells. Further children at shelter homes and migrant children were sensitised on the problem and capacitated for self protection and seeking help. A conscious need also emerged to rebrand tourism through strengthening local cultural identities so that healthy and responsible tourism practices are promoted and the divide between the 'real' Goa and the 'tourist destination' Goa is bridged. Unifem supported us in our research, awareness campaign and capacity building interventions.

Researching emerging vulnerabilities leading to proliferation of human trafficking in West Bengal and Sikkim

Trafficking routes, tactics and trends were researched as part of an awareness campaign on vulnerabilities of women and children in the extremely vulnerable source and transit district of Murshidabad in India Bangladesh border, districts in North Bengal and Sikkim. Theatre was innovatively used to understand push and pull factors leading to increased vulnerability of women and children to trafficking. The research led to area wise mapping of diverse factors ranging from disruptions in tea economy to increasing lure for materialistic and westernised lifestyle. The interventions were supported by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India and Unifem.





Our success stories

Jharkhand

Dayamani Nag of Bursu Village in Murhu Block of Khunti was sold off in Delhi by traffickers who kidnapped her on her way back home from a visit to relatives. Her mother Magdale Nag was at a loss to trace her daughter. The street theatre shows held at Bursu, helped Magdale Nag to get assistance and immediately lodge a complaint with the Murhu Police who initiated an investigation. A phone call from Dayamani, made an already aware Magdale to ask her daughter's whereabouts to locate her easily. In this way, Dayamani's parents found her address and sent a relative to bring her back.



The workshops and street theatre shows succeeded in encouraging proactivity among village communities and the Anganwadi workers to maintain better communication with the administrative body such as the police and the Panchayat. Issues related to trafficking are being addressed at the Gram Sabha meetings regularly.

Nadia, West Bengal

Kamini Sardar, aged 13 years, resident of Gopalpur, Natna G.P of Tehatta-I Block, was a student of class II of Henry Dunant Child Labour School. One of her distant relatives lured her with a false job promise and was taken away by him. She was finally rescued from Beldanga, Murshidabad district with the help of a member, Sabitry Sardar, of Gopalpur Action Group.



Shuktara Khatun, aged 12 years, a resident of Umarpur, Ramnagar-I G.P of Hanskhali Block has been missing since early December'10. Altaf Banu Bibi- a member of Umarpur Action Group reported this case to the Police Station. She and Akkash Dafadar - another member of the same action group also contacted the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) for taking proper action.

Malda, West Bengal

Laltu Das of Block Chanchol-I, Grampanchayat- Kharba, is an enterprising social worker of "Chanchol Gramunnayan Samity". He has stopped 13 early marriages in Ashapur, Diyagunj and Mangalbari villages. He organized a rally with young boys and girls of his locality to create awareness on the ill effects of child marriage and its related laws.

Three early marriages have been stopped by the Youth team of Gazole Block in Majhra Grampanachyat. Anjali Pramanik, the youth member of this group is very active and alert in her locality. The members of this youth group have taken initiative to organize meetings on awareness and ill effects of child marriage with different teams of children in the age group of 12 to 13 years. These new teams are now enabled to mobilize the local children and people on early marriage issues.

Anita Poddar (14 years), a student of Class- VIII of Kaliachak Girls' High school in Block Kaliachak -I, village Kalikapur set an example as she opposed and stopped her marriage. Later, she joined a theatre group- 'Muskaan' at Kaliachawk Block and regularly performs in theatre shows depicting the issue of prevention of child marriage. She is also continuing her studies simultaneously. This brave girl is an inspiration for girls of her age.



Women & Child Development	Issues	State	Client
Health	Reproductive Health	Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, U.P., Rajasthan, West Bengal	IPAS, Jansankhya Shirta Kosh, Udaipur District Administration, Govt of Rajasthan, Abt Associates Inc., Unicef
	Health & Nutrition	Kerala, Tamil Nadu, HP, Maharashtra, UP, Bihar, Gujrat, Goa, West Bengal, Assam, MP, Sikkim, Orissa, Jharkhand, Rajasthan	Heart Care Foundation, Unicef
Child Survival	Immunisation	West Bengal, Jharkhand	Unicef, Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Jharkhand
	Diarrhoea Management	UP, Uttaranchal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan	Abt Associates
Gender and Child Rights	Dowry, Child Marriage, Witch Hunting, Female Foeticide, Domestic Violence, Legal Literacy and Economic Empowerment.	Bihar	Women Development Corporation, Deptt. Of Social Welfare, Government of Bihar
	Prevention of child marriage	West Bengal	Unicef
	Child Protection	West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Sikkim, Goa	US Department of State to monitor and Combat TIP, UNODC, Unifem, Dept. of Women and Child Development, Government of India
Adolescent & Child Education	Creating environment of positive discipline in schools	Bihar	Unicef
	Adolescent Education	Delhi	UNFPA
	Early Childhood Education	West Bengal, Delhi, Rajasthan, Maharashtra	Sesame Workshop India
	Research	Bihar, West Bengal	Unicef, SSA
Women and HIV	Protection and prevention from HIV	Amritsar, Bhubaneshwar	HIV Alliance
Women and Livelihood	Empowering Women	West Bengal	KUSP, Zilla Parishad, EZCC, EU