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HEALTH

OUR community health programme reaches 11 villages, in three blocks and under five panchayats and a municipality. In matters like health service to school children or blood donation camps we do go beyond these 11 but these are event-specific and do not entail any stable commitment.

We do our work through six full-time workers and seven who work only when there is something particular for them to do.

Mother and child care is still our main concern in the 11 villages. All married women of child-bearing age and children below five are covered by our programme. This year we kept in touch with 3427 eligible couples in these 11 villages and helped them with advice on access to contraceptive measures. The table below summarizes the situation in ten of them.

Village	Sterilization	Oral pills(cycles)		Condoms	Loops
Bajitpur	8	831	3540	0	
DweepMedia	1	275	5760	0	
Uttar Media	3	150	10650	0	
Fatullyapur	7	1189	12580	1	
Bhojpara	4	817	7220	0	
Sarfarajpur	2	740	4280	2	
Punra	1	544	5430	0	
Chandalati	9	797	1060	1	
Beliyakhali	9	837	6920	4	
Parpatna	13	1380	3910	0	
TOTAL	57	7560	61350	8	

Apart from these, 32 women took Depo Provera injections, which are most likely harmful in the long run, and 28 took homeopathic contraceptives, which are most likely inefficacious. In ten villages there were 55 abortions, 11 of them uninduced, 16 under proper medical supervision, and in 28 cases a quack was called. Apart from these there were 344 pregnancies in ten villages. Each of these women received our worker's attention, their blood pressure was measured and weight taken regularly. In 52 cases they were asked to see a doctor, for some condition that our worker could determine but not remedy. We kept track of all births and deaths in ten villages but despite our best efforts we do not feel certain these figures are totally accurate. Our records say there were 375 births, 205 of them boys, and 170 girls. Of these 375, 12 were stillborn, and 5 died in their first year. There was one more death before the age of 5, and altogether 94 persons older than that died in the year. In four of these 11 villages the Government regularly holds vaccination camps where children get immunized against diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, measles, and tuberculosis. Our workers make sure that all children go to these camps at their appointed date. They also help the Government

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staff in arranging for and running the camps. Home visits are a regular part of our workers' routine. They have cards for households which keep a note of each family's health situation and requirements and apart from talking about health and hygiene, our workers do what the card expects them to. They are all trained to treat common diseases with both allopathic and herbal medicines and it is generally the sick person's choice which to take. This year we treated 4,829 persons with allopathic medicine and 630 with herbs.

Thus providing cheap and non-toxic curative facilities is of course good but much better would be to have a situation where villagers will have much less occasion to seek medical help. For this we have to raise the level of their awareness of all things, personal and communal, that have to do with good health, and throughout the year we held discussions, formal and informal, with only some people or at a large gathering, just a few words about a specific situation or a day-long session on a wide theme.

On a few occasions we bring in outside resource persons but usually our health workers can now talk with full confidence and competence on most topics. Among the subjects covered at these discussions were family planning and welfare, immunization, problems of adolescence, especially for girls, blood donation, sanitation, use of toilets, care about water, nutrition, intestinal worms, common problems of digestion, general physical well-being, herbal medicines etc. This year, there were 133 such discussions in our 11 villages, with 4,308 participants, and we also went to 5 other villages to talk to 483 persons on 16 occasions.

We have already said that there were 375 births in ten villages. Of these 93 were at some health center or the other - Dweep Media and Uttar Media together saw 18 births, and not one was with any medical help, for the health centre is just too far away and the journey too uncertain for a woman who may go into labour at any time - and the remaining 282 were at the hands of midwives, or dais.

Only 20 of these were assisted by trained dais. Last year we had talked to 135 of these women in 9 villages and had collated their experiences, problems and weak points, and requirements to raise their performance level. Three of our health workers went to CINI in Kolkata to learn more about what can be done and after they had returned and shared their knowledge with their colleagues, we called 72 dais from 10 villages in three groups for a day-long workshop with each.

All the figures for meetings and discussions that we have given so far are for what took place in the various villages. Our main centre, at Andharmanik, also plays host to many such meetings. Apart from the monthly meetings and inter-sectional meetings where participation is only for Swanirvar workers, there was one 4-day workshop on Health and Development attended by 32 persons, and a 2-day training on nutrition, with 70 participants.

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Our workers and their supervisor attended a number of trainings on various issues organized by CRY, CINI, All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, etc. In November we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with AIHPH for working together in an arsenic mitigation project funded by the Indo-Canadian Environment Fund. Until the end of the year we were still preparing the groundwork for work on this very big project to start in real earnest.

We collected 1,227 units of blood this year for the Government blood banks and only for them. Particularly notable was the camp organized by Janakalyan Samity, our affiliate organization at Magurkhali, soon after the floods when people in the area were still to re-build their homes or resume work. To show their appreciation for all the help they had received during the disaster 398 persons, 101 of them women, turned up to donate blood. The following table gives details of all the camps.

Date	Organization	Total donors	Male	Female
29.04.2000	Rudrapur Nabakallol	50	38	12
29.06.2000	Eastern Standard School, Duttapara	91	81	10
08.07.2000	Balki High School	100	77	23
14.08.2000	Gokulpur Seba Sadan	42	34	08
09.09.2000	Bithari United Club	80	73	07
18.11.2000	Janakalyan Samiti, Magurkhali	398	297	101
31.12.2000	Nabashree Sangha, Iswarigachha	39	30	9
08.01.2001	Punra Sanghashree Club	74	68	6
05.02.2001	Islamic Sanskritic Sangstha, Baduria	60	53	7
21.02.2001	B.S.E & H.D.C.,Matia Palli Unnayan Kendra, Chandalati	181	140	41
13.03.2001	Jyoti Sangha,Bhojpara	80	36	4
	TOTAL 12 camps	1227	982	245