

## **BIKALPA : AN ALTERNATIVE**

***( a long-term alternative livelihood opportunities through sustainable agro-practices as a post-flood rehabilitation initiative in Sunderban delta by BTS)***

**Preface:** Recent a devastating Cyclone Aila has devastated a large area of human habitation including their Shelters & major sources(pond and Agricultural Lands) of livelihood and existence in the delta points under the Biosphere Zone of Sunderban Tiger Reserve Forests.Saline River water by flood as its next phenomenon swallowed away everything they had and made the victims with no livelihood opportunities to explore.Immediate relief-aids from a certain sources, not sufficient at all, was a vague-drama to cope-up with the crucial moments in which the bad lucks were struggling for existence with a gripping ties of local leaders.Amidst the disgusting scenario we NGO leaders had to with them to serve the needy and the starving population.Only shies and tensions of life grasping a total sunderban areas with no hopes to lead on ...really there is now nothing but the open sky over their head, a polt of land may be under their fatigued /languished feet to move on with a last hope for their next survivors, their loving ones.

Being in the situation, BTS finds nothing but our friend-organisations' kind support to be with them in those taugher –harder days not yet to pass by easily but with a trickling reliefs having a drop of safe water or a packet of foodproducts.

The situation of **10 worstly villages** is now with a different reality to face as there is no scope of farming lands or no pond to have fish-culture as one of their alternative livelihood sources in the food-hit area still turmoiled with salinity and uncertainty.So many stalls/shops are no more...washed away by the swift spell of terbulents river-water currents. Damage is indescribable or immeasurable but naked futility is open to all...!

Our humanitarian outlook/sypathies rounds up all the clock-hours to go with them and serve a lot...that's why we are marching towards a same lot keeping us in the same boat of long-term partnership to explore possibilities of their rehabilitation and timely development to sustain life and color in its brief span to anticipate.

### **Existing Sources to explore alternative livelihood opportunities:**

1. Agricultural Land (though inundated with saline river water)
2. Pond of Fish Culture with Mixed/Composit Farming
3. Small Stalls/shops for income and employment generation

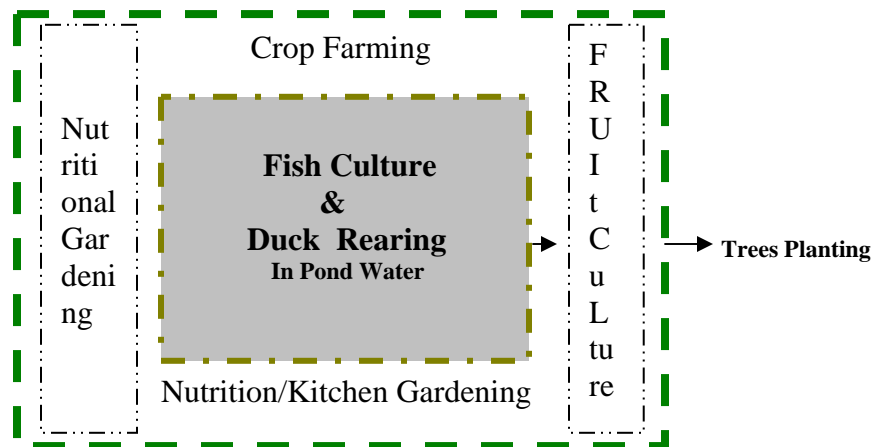
**Otherwise to welcome migration to urban cities in search of livelihoods keeping away their female-counterparts or children without education or family healthcare.Migration is sure to intensify their burdens/life-problems due to long-absence and uncertainty of needed proper sources of income.Typically creating an embarrassing nuisance of HIV/AIDS or some other male-practices like taking alcohols/drugs etc...and it is cought in the web.So, it's better to rehab them in their locality and involve them in the above.**

## Possible interventions:

### 1. Promoting Composite Farming with Land shapping & Rainwater harvesting:

Composit Farming is a type of mixed Farming in which an integrated farming components are included. Besides Pond Fishery, Nutritional Vegetable Gardening ,seasonal Fruits Cultivation, Crop Framing(SRI & Chilly), Duck rearing in the pond water to use the litter as bio-components of this farming system are introduced .Moreover, in the longrun (after 5 years) one time capital income can be earned out of the Plantation program on the four Boundary area of the Land designed for the same .Totally the system to be nurtured circling a pond and pondstead land of atleast .33 acre.

BTS is parctising the Farming System in the area as one of its alternative livelihood sources. A diagram is shown below:



**Landshapping** : Initially dewatering of saline water from the land and pond to be ensured by pumpsets and long delivery pipe so as to prepare /shape the land for upcoming cultivation/farming with rainwater.Land boundaries are to be erect high and preserve rainwater,till the land to mix up the saline components with rainwater and next to pour out the water outside the land through nearby canals not through the other farmers' farming lands.Next rainwater is to preserve and prepare the land by farming green-manures like Dhaincha or shon like weeds with an inclusion of Gypsum(50-75 kg per Bigha) and bio-fertilisers. Saline proof seeds of paddy or other crops for rotational farming in a mixed manner to be managed through this Composite venture.

Land shapping is also practicable through excavating/desilting the ponds in the farmers' farming land.As a result, there is a huge possibility to produce vegetables, crops, fruits, eggs and fish to enhance the farmers' earning by ensuring sale proceeds.

Farmers are to supply with salinity-proof seeds and technologies besides landshapping.

## Analysis of Income Generating Program : CF

### 1.Composit Farming through Land Shapping and rainwater harvesting:

<u>Sl. No.</u>	<u>Investment</u>	<u>Income</u>
01	Preparation of Land Rs. 600.00	Sale Proceeds of Fish Rs. 5,000.00
02	De-Siltation of Pond Rs. 1,400.00	Sale of Vegetables & Crops
03	Seeds & Fishlings Rs. 1,500.00	Like Paddy, Chilly Rs. 4,000.00
04	BiO Compost Preparation & Bio-Pesticides Rs. 300.00	Sale of Egg & Meat Rs. 2,000.00
05	Duck rearing in pond	
	Water for Pisciculture & Egg/meat production Rs. 500.00	
06	Veterinary Care Rs. 300.00	
07	Labour Wages & Other Contingencies Rs. 400.00	
	Total Cost/Unit Rs. 5,000.00	Total Income Rs. 11,000.00

**Net Profit Rs.6,000.00(Average Rs.500.00/Month) BTS has case studies in this regard.**

### **Training & Marketting:**

BTS has sufficient expertise ,peer-groups and infrastructures to train up the selected beneficiaries for the same as BTS has been practicing this efforts for more than 3 years.Besides this, **BTS will involve partnership with Resource Traing Organisation LKP(Lok Kalyan Parishad)-Kolkata , working with P&RD, Govt. of WB.**Marketting facility is sufficiently strong and there would be no problem in this matter of marketing.

Local big markets like Raidighi, Kakdwip, Dhaki, Jamtala are well-communicated and easy to have good sale of the produces and earn possible incomes.

**BTS Experience: Some photos:**



### **Some Case Studies:**

--Arun Das

--Jaba Das

## **2. Villagelevel Small Shop/Business**

*(Tea-Stall,Grocery,Repairing Cycle Garrage/Shops,Vending,Van etc.)*

### **Description:**

Villagelevel small shops/stalls are the key livelihood sources for those who are usually landless or marginal or in nature. They do not have any alternative sources to earn. To stop/avoid migration or going to the risky reserved forest areas...these families usually in need of such income-generating endeavours to continue their children's education or have basic health care besides leading lives in a very deplorable situation. The situation prevails an urgency just after the cyclone and flood to undertake such type of ready made stalls/shops in the area as the families are now under a severe spell of complete damage and devastation.

### **Target Groups of such efforts:**

Physically Handicapped or impaired  
Low-income marginal poor youths  
Landless or Roadside dwellers  
Tiger/Crocodile Widows in vulnerable situation  
Week/Feeble Senior Citizens of Sunderban



### **Identified Feasible Entrepreneurships/Enterprizes:**

1. Tea Stalls/Pan Shops
2. Repairing Shops(Mobile/Watch/Cycle/two wheelers)
3. Vending like Stall with Fish/Vegetables
4. Rice making/Puffed rice making
5. Van-pullers support(Purchase Van like carriage)
6. Photo shop/Silk-Printing Stall
7. Tailoring/Sewing Stall
8. Scientific Goat rearing / poultry farming



### **Methodology of such Initiatives:**

The initial support of Rs.5,000 per unit will be for such alternative livelihood source generation purpose for the poor and flood-hit area-people in need.

Support will be in 2-3 installments so as to ensure initiation of the endeavours as selected/identified above.Only for purchase of Shop-materials or small equipments will be promoted.Structure of stall/shops are needed to procure by the entrepreneur themselves. Though SHG(Self Help Group) mode of project mobilization, the said effort-oriented programs will be promoted to enhance family-income and stability.

**It is expected as per our case study analysis, each trade can easily generate a sum of Rs.500.00-1000.00 per month which is almost supportive to such families of low-income categories.**

### 3. Nutrition/Vegetable Gardening by Rural mothers/women :



**Nutritional/Kitchen Gardening** may be taken as one of the most important alternative to enhance income generation besides availing ample possibility to grow nutritional food habits in the malnourished poor families with a certainty towards food security among the flood victims.

Some saline-proof seeds of vegetables, pulses for rotational farming are there to ensure the possibility. There are certain trials and Techniques to bring a positive result in this type of farming initiatives. It is low-cost and practicable for poor marginal farm-families in the villages of Sunderban delta region.

Low-cost process envisages its long-term effects with the use of bio-fertilisers or pesticides from local natural herbs/weeds or plants like neem. Chem-free farming technique thus ensures child health and nutritional support in the families besides income-generation by sale of excess vegetables. Plantation of several fruit-trees may multiply its profit-oriented motive among the poor and the marginal in distress after the cyclone –aila and the devastating flood thereafter.

An amount of Rs.1,000.00 is enough for promoting such Model Gardening Programs by the rural poor women. It is called Model because in the process of such gardening there will be different components like cultivation of Medi-Herbs/Plants to access primary support from the properties among the medi-plants Seed Bank and Grain Bank concepts will be there to have promotion of country seeds to use avoiding the tendency to buy cross-breeds/hybrid seeds of huge rate with huge hazards.



## A BUDGETARY PROJECTION ON THE CONCEPT

Sl. No.	Activity Item/s	Unit	Unit Cost	Total (Rs.)
<b>A.</b>	<b>Awareness &amp; Training(Onetime)</b>			
1.	Training on Composit Farming	20	3,000	60,000
2.	Training on Dif. Trades	16	5,000	80,000
3.	Training on Model Gardening	20	3,000	60,000
				<b>2,00,000</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>Program Support(Onetime)</b>			
1.	Composit Farming Unit Support	200	5,000	10,00,000
2.	Selected Tradewise Support	100	5,000	5,00,000
3.	Veg/Nutritional Gardening aid	1000	1,000	10,00,000
4.	Community Seed Banks	10	10,000	1,00,000
5.	Community Grain Banks	20	10,000	2,00,000
6.	Nursery Raising by SHG women	100	1000	1,00,000
7.	Central Seed Bank Program	01	1,00,000	1,00,000
				<b>30,00,000</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>Administrative Support(3 years)</b>			
1.	Project AdvisorProject Co-Ordinator	01	5,000	1,80,000
2.	Field Staff	10	1,500	5,40,000
3.	Audit & Accounting		30,000	90,000
4.	Printing & Statinary		24,000	72,000
5.	TA & Conveyance		12,000	36,000
6.	Incidental/Contingencies		12,000	36,000
				<b>9,54,000</b>

**Total Project Cost Estimated Rs. 41,54,000(US\$90,305)**