# Successful Case Study Of Model Gram Panchayat Leadership Development in Kurunnahar Gram Panchayat at Block-Labpur, District-Birbhum, State- West Bengal

[Theme: Documentation of good example of the 'Replicable collective leadership building in Gram Panchayat' process for systematic activation of functional Gram Sansad.]

#### Submitted To:

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# I. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Leadership development is defined as a process that makes people become better leaders. The relevant process must provide individuals with the space, opportunities, trainings, and experiences for them to excel, and to be effective leaders in their respective vicinity.

The obvious question emerge first, why Kurunnahar GP? It is because; Kurunnahar GP is one of the several GPs where IMSE is engaged in activation of energetic and proactive 'Gram Sansad' over last decade. This link led IMSE to study in specific, how and to what extent the 'Action-Reflection-Action' process, has gained recognition and aptly installed the defined base of the 'Leadership development' in reality.

Among people, the individual needs, demand and expectations, are not identical in nature. The actual challenge to the leadership capacity of any leader, in specific, thus rests on how to bring such divergence under a reasonable umbrella of 'common good' by means of attaining consensus through inclusive discussions. At the end, how all should have genuine smile while installing the interest of the society in large rather than merely sticking to individual or personal gain – is the harvest of a true and meaningful leadership. The discussion and findings were built up on this.

Apart from garnering data from authentic e-documents, the data available under FORM-27 of Kurunnahar GP has been incorporated.

At the evaluation and concluding section, it got established that instead restricting the ambit of leadership development only within 'Leading self' and Leading Panchayat', the Panchayat Pradhan and his team has been able to create a successful leadership to emerge within villagers. The Case Study found that the People are ready to take the onus and ownership of their respective responsibilities.

#### The Methodology followed:

Counting on the fact that the ambit of 'Leadership development' comprises a wide variety of factors and different styles; therefore straight, specific and cross-corroborative questions were framed to identify the core realities, facts and figures. Besides the methods of PRA that included involving the local people in the analysis and interpretation of the rural situation and a set of development techniques used by development practitioners to collect and analyze data, the observations from the relevant expert have been incorporated during the Case study to reach the outcome.

# People responsible at Kurunnahar-GP for achieving its goal:

Name	Age	Social	Economic	(i) Years of
		Background	Background	Experience in
				the participation
				of Social and (ii)
				political
				institutions and
				(iii) motivating
				factors
Mr. Manotosh Mondal	47	Pradhan -	Comes from a	(i) 20 years.
		Kurunnahar	farmer's family	(ii) Pradhan
		GP. Edu.		since 2013
		Qualf. MA		(iii) His degree
				and unemploy-
				ment led him to
				social and
				political reform
Ms. Kalyani Konai	35	Up-Pradhan	Comes from a	8-10 years
		Kurunnahar GP	farmer's family	
Mr. Rameshwar	44	NS. Edu. Qualf:		Previously was
Chandra		Diploma in Civil		engaged with
		Engg.		social work
Mr. ParthaBagdi		EA		
Mr. Dolgobinda Rudra		Employee		
Mr. Bhavani Mete		Employee		

# **III. CASE PRESENTATION**

# 1. Situation which triggered to take initiative for change (or functions in certain areas)

While trying to understand, what were those key reasons that has instigated a reign for change, the available answer led to identify a well given thought based on demographic reality under the Kurunnahar GP.

The population under the GP consists of SC/ST 31%, Minority 25%, Others 44%. And, 41.25% of the total Household or around 5,000 people are under the BPL category. The priority lines were precise – food, health and education, backed by elevation of required economic and social empowerment. In reality, the needed transformation was dependent on two specific questions –

- (i) How to create employment opportunities?
- (ii) How to establish economic and social empowerment of the women?

The emerged obvious problems pertinent to the questions of these 'how', eventually led to the essential and inevitable need for a change.

#### 2. Change She/He brought in after assuming office:

Taking into account the vast gaps between public expectations and available resources with the GP, the GP Management took an unconventional but planned decision. The GP decided, let the people to fix the priorities. In addition, allowed the people to be equipped with relevant and required information, besides providing details of probable pros and cons of every possible situation.

The GP went for gradual changes in the mindset of the people in terms of the need. It understood the imposition of easy one-way decision would rather cause further constrains. On the contrary, if mindset of people are not modified; 'what', 'when' and 'how' of the work schedule wouldn't be achieved. The GP therefore tried to instill the sense of onus and ownership of their respective responsibilities, among people.

As example, the GP explained - how the women could improve the financial state of a family, so thus the condition of food, health and education. It also clarified how the influences of superstations and restrictions on women cease the opportunities of women's participations. GP invited people to look at the problem, to identify their respective role and responsibilities, and to resolve due solutions to the problems.

#### 3. SITUATION BEFORE:

Earlier GP Leadership perhaps has overlooked or ignored to weigh the values and utilization of potential skills of individual commoner. The routine functions of GP were probably mere travelling through a single way, as a kind of 'service provider-recipient beneficiaries' mode, without facilitating a channel of dialogues and space of participation within two relevant ends. The gaps between inadequate availability of financial resources and volume of needed services therefore were increasing, hence the growing dissatisfactions and detachment among people. In the past the think tank of GP Management might have failed to view economic opportunity from two different but essential angles. On the resource front, the required planning for optimum utilizations of the available resources and possibility of generation of own resource in future through the creation of new assets. Secondly, much necessary proper utilizations of potential skills of individuals, and, to involve these 'resourced individuals' for the economic upliftment of the community.

#### 4. ACTIVITIES PERFORMED OVER THE YEARS

On the areas of providing services/amenities:-

**Education:** the availability of Primary school has increased from 11 in 2011 to 17 in 2017. Beside existing one, a new Senior Secondary school has come up. The number of Anganwadi Centers has been increased to 23.

The present GP has constructed 2 buildings for ICDS centre with an expenditure amount of Rs. 10 Lakhs.

**Health:** Primary health sub centre has been increased to three from the one in past. All new five numbers of Medicine Shops and one Dispensary are available today.

**Drinking water:** Out of total available 360 nos. of Tube wells, 308 numbers of Tube wells has been installed by the Present GP.

**Roads:** Out of total 25 KMs available all-weather roads today, 21 KMs of this has been constructed by the Present GP.

**Sewage:** 13.2 KMs sewage has been constructed newly.

Availability of toilet: Every household one each.

**Rescue centre:** Rs. 3.5 lakhs has been spent to construct a Rescue centre, which can accommodate minimum 500 people during any natural disaster.

Sub post office: all new three.

On the economic front:-

Total number of 56 ponds and irrigation channels has been excavated and reexcavated with a total spending of Rs. 4.5 crore.

All new 29 numbers of Bore wells for Irrigation has been installed.

Under NREGA Rs. 2.93 crore has been incurred. From this NREGA work, the GP has created fixed assets of 12 numbers of new ponds, worth Rs. 72 lakhs. These kind of fixed assets will help GP to generate own funds in near future.

The GP also has spent lakhs for the plantations of trees in 3 mouzas till date.

A total number of 356 SHG has been formed.

#### 5. Supportive Agencies/ Institutions/Individuals:

An institution cannot function discreetly without the aid of its supportive agencies, institutions or individuals. It is through their continuous support and assistance that contributes towards the successful of working of an institution.

Under the Constitution, a GP is an institution, meant for and engaged in public services for the grass-root people in rural India. Like all other governmental institutions, GP too exists and functions with its statutory rights, duties and limitations. More importantly, in the stairs of delivering public services, GP is the last step. Whatever Kurunnahar GP has achieved today, it is the outcome of the support of all institutions at all level, including the most important; 14 Gram Sansads under the Kurunnahar GP.

# IV. OUTCOME

#### 1. Problems faced by Elected Representative

The GP Management explained, any responsible person at the top of a public office is always grappled by two fold challenges or problems.

The first problem/challenge being, every public work needs financial support. The question appears before the authority concerned at each level; are the available financial resources adequately sufficient?

The second problem/challenge is that, amidst people, the individual need, demand and expectations, are largely not identical in nature. The real problem, or to say actual challenge to the leadership capacity of any leader, in specific, thus rest here; and that is, how to bring such divergence under a reasonable umbrella of 'common good' by means of attaining at a consensus through the process of due discussions.

The Kurunnahar GP Management however had a series of added problems, involving people to identify the solutions to the problems and making people to be proactive during the implementations of the relevant solutions.

The required clarification from GP Management comes through the following cited example. Economic empowerment of women demands the increased share of women in political and social arena. And all these needed empowerments of women strongly demands the must and complete ceding of long lasted fallacies and imposed various restrictions by the society on women. Making people to understand and accept the flaws, and agreeing for voluntarily rejection of these aged old carried baggage, though seemingly appears much easy, but in reality; had to pass through many practical hurdles.

#### 2. Adaptive measures and strategies to overcome the problem

In order to mobilize villagers to transform themselves, the GP leadership was certain on two counts, first; GP must know what people in the villages were thinking, second; GP would encourage them to articulate their points of view and their concerns, and be ready to respond to them sincerely.

The GP refused to rely on second-hand information or make assumptions about what the leadership was thinking the villagers or followers were also thinking alike.

The GP Management therefore decided that they would ask the villagers — and kept asking them until the answer became clear to them. Once the clarity was established, the GP think tank went for designing a step-wise strategy – built on unity and what could eliminate gaps within perception.

The individual skill of Problem Solving and Decision Making' process was webbed as 'team efforts'.

The GP leadership tried to reach to the core of any cited or emerged problem, instead of outright denying, or blaming people. And subsequently went for addressing and concentrating on issues on the whole more than doing it on individual basis.

The GP Team wanted to understand whether it was a real life problem or a perceived problem. And to do that the GP management, raised questions to self and others too based on what, where, how, when, with and why.

Based on the emerged answers, the potential causes for the raised problem was assessed from following three specific directions; to understand the actual existence of the problem, who were benefited, and lastly; who or who all were affected by it.

People were asked to present their ideas by GP, to identify alternatives approaches to resolve the problem. From all aired ideas, the GP leadership took note of best ideas based on rationality and reasons.

From collected best ideas, after evaluating essential and relevant practical factors, the best suitable approach was selected.

For the implementation of the identified best alternative/ideas, self Plan action plan was drawn by the GP.

Implementation of the plan was kept under proper monitoring. And, a continuous process of verification was maintained to identify if the problem had been resolved or not.

#### 3. Outcome of the measures and strategies

The perception has changed; the level of expectation has changed.

From most of the women's point of view, a visible change has taken place in the quality of living in many families. In the past, poverty was the single companion of their family. Women were living under stringent restrictions and they were barred from going out in the past by the communities and society. In a changed scenario within a short span, most of the women not only got engaged with SHG, more

importantly many of them started shouldering responsibilities as SHG leader after leaving behind the past. Family members of these working women were able to make them free from dark days of superstitions. Resultantly children started going to school. The participation and voices of women now allowed and accepted with equal importance to men.

The opinion and views of women within family eventually started to obtain greater importance. Women became more conscious about their rights. Child marriage turned out to be the curse of past. Every infant and children came under due vaccinations.

The atrocities against women have been reduced remarkably. People started accepting the responsibility to be more sensitive and careful for complete eradication of such incidences.

The combined views of the men from the villages endorsed, the state of the people from the marginal section has changed commendably. Besides better conditions of amenities, roads, irrigations etc., the facilities in the health and education front have improved. Most of the children are going to school. Girls are no more considered to remain indoors only; the literacy rate of girls has taken a raise. The more people are becoming sensible, the more they are making themselves free from the traps of superstitions. The sincere efforts by all have reflected on the development in agriculture front and farmers are more turning towards organic harvesting. People stopped from immigrating to other places for job and earning opportunities.

#### 4. Recognition for Her/His activities:

A clear perception exists in the thinking process of the villagers on the busy schedule and routine engagement of Panchayat Management. The villagers recognizes that the entire Panchayat Management always remains busy everyday only to cater and provide services on issue/receipt/authentication of various required documents with the scores of individuals. Besides these daily routine, constantly they need to fulfill their statutory responsibilities, and comply obligations with other Government Institutions/establishments.

The 'Para Baithak' and Gram Sansad (GS) thus exist as a bridge between the community and GP. The actual need of the people becomes comprehensively clear to the management in GP through GS. On the other hand, the people can read and

see GP through GS. Thus all the taken decisions and developments are processed and achieved through the joint discussions, consultations and participations between the people of respective GS and the Management of GP. And, unhesitatingly the villagers ratified that firstly, this crucial process wouldn't have taken place if not they had a successful and inspiring leader like Panchayat Pradhan Mr. Manotosh Mondal. The second clarification states, people eventually became much clear with onus and ownership of their respective responsibilities. Certainly this change couldn't see the light of success if not the Panchayat Pradhan and his marvelous team wouldn't have given space and create a sense of successful leadership to emerge within villagers.

#### 5. Future Plan and vision

The clarification of GP Team reflects that the essence of running a successful institution lies on few specific goals. These are, having a set of targets, plans for the future and a vision that aims to reach the set goals. These goals provide impetus to all the members to strive for a better future.

The Kurunnahar GP Management envisaged, in future they want to develop the fund requirement on the basis of per capita. Also, to measure the adequacy and appropriateness, they intend to assess the expenditure incurred on the respective fronts only on per capita basis. The GP Management aspired to go for more systematically for an inclusive development; therefore they felt for an essential need to be more meticulous with their aims, planning and for delivery module.

The GP Management wants to remain committed to the requisite and essential upliftment of the marginal section of people. Of the total 4848 households, yet 1725 households are under BPL category. The GP Management therefore feels that more entrepreneurship must be created through the SHG, so that; members from BPL households can join the mainstream for obtaining their financial independence." A common ambition exists within the entire GP – 'a co-education college'.

## V. Discussion

"Perhaps a more useful perspective is to consider leadership as a process – contextually situated within the relationships between people (be they 'leaders' or 'followers'). From this perspective what is more important than the leadership qualities of a number of individuals are the underlying processes that give rise to improved organisational effectiveness."

(Source: University of Exeter, Centre Fir Leadership Studies, What Is Leadership Development, Purpose & Practice.

http://business-hool.exeter.ac.uk/documents/discussion\_papers/cls/LSWreport2.pdf)

The dictionary definition of leadership state that leadership development is defined as a program or activity that makes people becomes better leaders. And the relevant process must provide individuals with the opportunities, training, and experiences for them to be effective leaders in their vicinity.

Besides these referred couple of definitions, whatever other definitions one might chose as appropriate, the requirement of basic skills of leadership qualities remains constant. The effective and successful leadership rest on five basic skills, those are; Communication, Basic planning, Delegation and Problem Solving and Decision Making.

Now it necessitates the identification that to what extend these basic skills exists at the vicinity of Kurunnahar GP Management.

#### On the communication front:

The Case Study tried to understand that degree of communication waves are being maintained by the Pradhan. Straightforward question thus was asked to Pradhan to know that whether he provides people honest answers to tough questions.

More candid response came from the Pradhan. He explained that a leader must always be able to provide honest information that would allow villagers to make informed choices. Under few genuine situations, when a leader can't answer a specific question, depending on the fact however the leader must clarify people. As examples:—

Though the leader understands the concern raised by the person but at present, the

leader doesn't have the apt answer to provide for. Or, as don't have the information yet, but will get back to you all as soon as decisions are made. Or, Even if it is require, better to say that though the leader having the information but can't release it now for administrative reason.

An appropriate analysis on the given answer by the Pradhan leads to indicates that the Pradhan was not hesitant from taking bold and direct question; even if it is asked before the public. It is also important to note that instead being skeptical, he responded in an undeviating manner, thus invites to measure the magnitude of his communication skills and courage of taking responsibilities in public life. Furthermore, he bares the onus of what is being said and done.

Any conclusion however remains incompletes if not are passed through the needed veracity straining process. So, an attempt was made to understand from the villagers that how often they have been denied from receiving proper and adequate information.

The substance of the reply received from the villagers-

They duly receive the information to their need and demand from the Panchayat. Else, it would have been very difficult for them to participate and to engage with the process of the change that so far has taken place under the GP. Therefore, whenever any information that has been restricted from reaching to the knowledge of the villagers, instead growing grudge; they generally considered that obvious official or logical reasons were the causes behind such imposed restrictions. The villagers made a single specific note — one can't behave in opposite direction in a single go; rely on your leader and also suspect your leader.

The given answers by the participants clarify their confidence in the Pradhan and in his team. A confidence can't grow in absence of a required understanding between two ends, and no understanding is maintainable in absence of an effective bridge of communication. It confirms two specific qualities on the role and responsibilities of the leader, the communication skill, and the elimination of gaps between promise and actual delivery.

#### On the issue of Basic Planning:

The Study identifies that while explaining the practiced methods of 'problem solving-decision making' and aim of establishing 'inclusive development', the Pradhan and his team were specific on the need to be of more meticulous in their aims, planning and for each delivery module.

The creation of assets from NREGA work for making the possible source of own revenue in future, leads to measure the depth and prudence of planning.

The elimination of poverty and gender barriers through planned SHG, invites to recognize that due forethought has been applied in the planning process pertaining to the socio-economic issues.

Connectivity, besides developing educational and health institutions, indicates the point of easy accessibility was given a prime cause.

The target plan with a basic purpose, such as, stop people from migrating to other places in search of employment, induces sincerity in the planning process.

#### On the issue of Delegation:

It was repeatedly aired by the people that in each aspect of the GP activities they remained a part of it. The study tried to assess that how often the villagers felt alienated from the taken 'final decision' by the leader?

The reply was clear and specific, they remain attached with the issue throughout, they always felt and could identify themselves as the part of the taken final decision.

A prominent existence of due implementations of delegation comes out when the study identifies that people always got engaged by the GP Management to identify the solutions to the problems, and people were subsequently driven to be proactive during the implementations of the relevant solutions.

Perhaps it clarifies and concludes the state of Delegation.

#### On the 'Problem Solving and Decision Making' front:

The Pradhan was very clear and comprehensive in his given explanation of the methods he follows on the issues of how to look at and solve problems, and reach to a final decision. He firmly clarified that leading is basically focused on influencing and driving people towards a right and required direction. He further elaborated in definite terms; people will never be interested to listen to their leader; if the so called leader

lacks the basic but most important skill that can master the Problem Solving and Decision Making abilities.

He emphasized that at the end, how all should have genuine smile while installing the interest of the society in large rather merely sticking to individual or personal gain – is the harvest of a true and meaningful leadership.

The explained adaptive measures and strategies to overcome the problem, perhaps duly justifies that how equipped was the Pradhan and his team on the 'Problem Solving and Decision Making' front.

The Study decides to intensify its scanning further.

The principle of 'Leadership development' defines that it must provide individuals required scope to excel with the opportunities, training, and experiences for them to be effective leaders in their vicinity.

The Case Study identifies that Kurunnahar GP has duly honored this principle of 'Leadership development' while counting the following interesting narratives –

A lady participant explained: Earlier she was merely living with many borrowed identities. She was known and often addressed as someone's daughter/sister/wife/mother etc., but at present she does proudly carry only her 'self identity'; and that is; her name 'Rupali Pal', the 'leader of SHG'. She now can walks along with men, render views and voices. It became possible only because; she was helped by GP to defeat the burden of all social and economic barriers she had in the past. And, there exist many like her in the GP.

The tale undoubtedly leads to conclude that Kurunnahar Gram Panchayat at Labpur, Birbhum, West Bengal, cannot be ignored and deprived from recognizing as Model Gram Panchyat in Leadership Development.

Leadership Development is a continuous process. The success of Leadership Development always depends that how often and how judiciously, the person responsible concerned can mix and match the different blends of following leadership styles, i.e. Laissez-faire, Democratic and Transformational Leadership, and certainly in terms of respective need and relevance. The study identifies that the Panchayat Pradhan and the Panchayat Management of Kurunnahar GP was well versed with the required mix and match blending techniques of Leadership.

Even the respected observer in this Case Study, Dr. Debashish Sarkar, from Visva-Bharati University – Bolpur, an expert in Panchayiti Raj Institutions, has endorsed his agreement with the emerged conclusion of the Case Study.

#### **Relevance of the Training of PRIs:**

How the structure of the 'Problem solving and Decision making' process/strategy can be developed in PRIs.

How PRIs can mix and match the different blends of leadership to attain the true spirit of Leadership Development.

How the collective & effective leadership in the Gram Panchayat can enhance the economic benefits and opportunity for the community.

# **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Mr. Subir Dey, Mr. Arbinda Mukherjee from IMSE - Kolkata

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## Few relevant details of the Kurunnahar Gram Panchayat

Total Area under Kurunnahar Gram Panchayat	647,824 Hector	
Total population	Total- 20,610 Female - 9,987 Male - 10,623 SC - 6,092	
	ST – 310 Minority – 5,144 Others – 9,064	
Total number of Household  Main economic activities	4,848 Agriculture	
Three most important commodities are produced  Number of SHGs  Total number of members	Rice, Pulses and Mustard Oil 356 1,369	
Total number of household under BPL category	1,725	
Total number of Gram Sansad under the GP	14	

Source: Primary Data collected from Kurunnahar GP

# FEW OF THE ENTIRE ACTIVITIES PERFORMED OVER THE YEARS By Kurunnahar GP

(Since 2013, the incumbent GP is in office)

SI.		PERFORMANCE/
No.	PARTICULARS	Amenities
		Available Today
1	Health service and education to child and	23
	women through ICDS, Anganwadi Centers	
	(2011 Census of India: Entire Labpur Block	
	had 147 Nos.)	
2	Primary school (2011 Census of India: 06)	17
3	Senior Secondary school	02
	(2011 Census of India: 01)	
4	Primary health sub centre	03
	(2011 Census of India: 01)	
5	Dispensary (2011 Census of India: 0)	01
6	Medical practitioner with other degree	03
	(2011 Census of India: 0)	
7	Medicine Shop (2011 Census of India: 0)	05
8	Tap water (2011 Census of India: No)	03
9	Tube wells	360
	(2011 Census of India: Tube wells/Bore well:	
9A	No)	
	Tube wells has been installed by the Present	308
	GP	
10	Pucca roads (2011 Census of India: Yes)	25 KMs
10A	Connectivity through construction of all-	21 KMs
	weather roads has been constructed by the	
	Present GP	
11	Bore well (2011 Census of India: Tube wells/ Bore well: No)	29 (Irrigation)

SI. No.	PARTICULARS	PERFORMANCE/ Amenities Available Today
12	Agriculture by excavation and re-excavation	
	of ponds, irrigation channels	56 Nos
13	Self Help Group (2011 Census of India:	356
	Entire Labpur Block had only 157 Nos.)	
14	Availability of toilet	Every household
		01 each
15	Proper sewage – Newly constructed	13.2 KMs
16	Sanitation under Mission Nirmal Bangla	ODF Declared
17	Tractors (2011 Census of India: Yes)	28
18	Cycle-pulled rickshaws - Manual & Machine	32
	driven	
	(2011 Census of India: Yes)	
19	Sub post office (2011 Census of India: 'B',	03
	i.e. 5-10 Kms of nearest place where facility	
	is available is given).	
20	Internet cafes/ Common service centre (2011	04
	Census of India: 'B', i.e. 5-10 Kms of nearest	
	place where facility is available is given).	
21	Auto/Modified Autos (2011 Census of India:	40
	'B', i.e. 5-10 Kms of nearest place where	
	facility is available is given).	
22	Integrated Child Development Scheme	23
	((2011 Census of India: Entire Labpur Block	
	had 69 Nos.)	
23	Power Supply for Domestic Use	98%
24	Power Supply for Agricultural Use	100%

Source: Census of India 2011, WEST BENGAL, SERIES-20, PART XII-A.

Primary Data collected from Kurunnahar GP

# **PHOTOGRAPHS**



Kurunnahar Gram Panchayat Office at Bunia, Labpur Block, Dist: Birbhum, West Bengal



Panchayt Pradhan and his team. Kurnnahar Gram Panchayat From R to L: Ms. Kalyani Konai – Upo Pradhan, Mr. Manotosh Mondal – Pradhan, Mr. Rameshwar Chandra – Nirman Sahayok, Mr. Partha Bagdi – Executive Assistant.



A section of participant villagers



Mr. Manotosh Mondal - Pradhan, delivering his address



Mr. Manotosh Mondal – Pradhan listening carefully a question from Principal Investigator (PI)



A participant replying to a question asked by PI



A participant placing his point of views



A participant sharing his experiences



A young participant with his voice



A participant clarifying his point



Dr. Debashish Sarkar, from Visva-Bharati University – Bolpur, an expert in Panchayiti Raj Instituions, as an observer he is expressing his the conclusion he has from the entire discussions and relevant fact finding exercises.



Women Empowerment Association, under Kurunnahar Gram Panchayat



Independent and smiling faces in Kurunnahar Gram Panchayat