

Chander Anchal : A Supplementary School for Tribal Children at Bagdiha Village, Bankura

**An Outreach Initiative of Asutosh Museum of Indian Art,
University of Calcutta**

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1. Objectives of the Practice

- To improve access to basic education for tribal children in a remote village setting.
- To address learning gaps among first-generation learners through supplementary academic support.
- To integrate educational intervention with community-based heritage and livelihood development initiatives.
- To promote inclusive education and social responsibility through institutional outreach.

2. The Context

Bagdiha village in Susunia area of Bankura district is predominantly inhabited by Mahali tribal families, many of whom are first-generation learners. Limited access to quality schooling, irregular attendance, lack of learning support at home, and economic vulnerabilities have adversely affected children's educational continuity.



Following the successful **Outreach and Livelihood Promotion Workshop** and the preparation of the **Village Development Plan (VDP)**, the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, University of Calcutta, identified education as a critical area requiring immediate intervention. Community interactions revealed the urgent need for a **supplementary learning centre** to support tribal children beyond formal school hours.

3. The Practice

Initiating Institution : Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, University of Calcutta

Place : Bagdiha Village, Susunia, Chatna Block, Bankura District, West Bengal

Date of Establishment : 1 May 2025

Name of the Supplementary School : “*Chander Anchal*”

Target Group : Tribal children (Mahali and other indigenous communities)

Nature of Intervention

- A **community-based supplementary school** providing academic support, basic literacy and numeracy, creative learning, and value-based education.
- The initiative was launched **without formal institutional funding**, relying initially on voluntary contributions from individuals and non-governmental organisations.
- Nearly **50 indigenous children** are currently enrolled and attending the centre regularly.

Challenges Faced

- Lack of a permanent infrastructure during the initial phase.
- Disruption of classes during the monsoon season due to the absence of a weather-resistant space.
- Dependence on voluntary contributions for operational sustainability.

Institutional Response

Recognising the infrastructural challenge, the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art formally appealed to the **West Bengal Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes Development & Finance Corporation (WBSCSTOBCDFC)** for support.



In response, WBSCSTOBCDFC agreed to **construct a permanent school building** for the supplementary school.

4. Evidence of Success

- Establishment of a functioning supplementary school in a remote tribal village.
- Enrollment of approximately **50 tribal children**, many of whom are first-generation learners.
- Active community participation and parental support for the initiative.
- Formal institutional backing secured for permanent infrastructure development.

5. Impact of the Practice

- Improved learning continuity and academic support for tribal children.
- Increased community awareness regarding the importance of education.
- Strengthened trust and collaboration between the university and the local community.

- Integration of educational development within a broader framework of heritage, livelihood, and community empowerment.

6. Sustainability and Future Plans

- Construction of a **permanent school building** with support from WBSCSTOBCDFC is currently in progress.
- Plans to introduce structured learning modules, creative activities, and heritage-based education.
- Scope for involvement of university students and faculty as part of extension activities, internships, and service-learning programmes.
- Exploration of long-term funding and academic support through institutional and governmental channels.

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7. Challenges and Lessons Learnt

- Community-based educational initiatives require sustained infrastructural and financial support.
- Institutional partnerships are crucial for long-term sustainability in remote areas.
- Educational intervention is most effective when integrated with livelihood and community development planning.



8. Notes

This educational intervention highlights the evolving role of a **university museum as a socially responsive institution**, extending its engagement beyond heritage preservation to **inclusive education and community development**, in alignment with NAAC quality indicators and UGC outreach mandates.