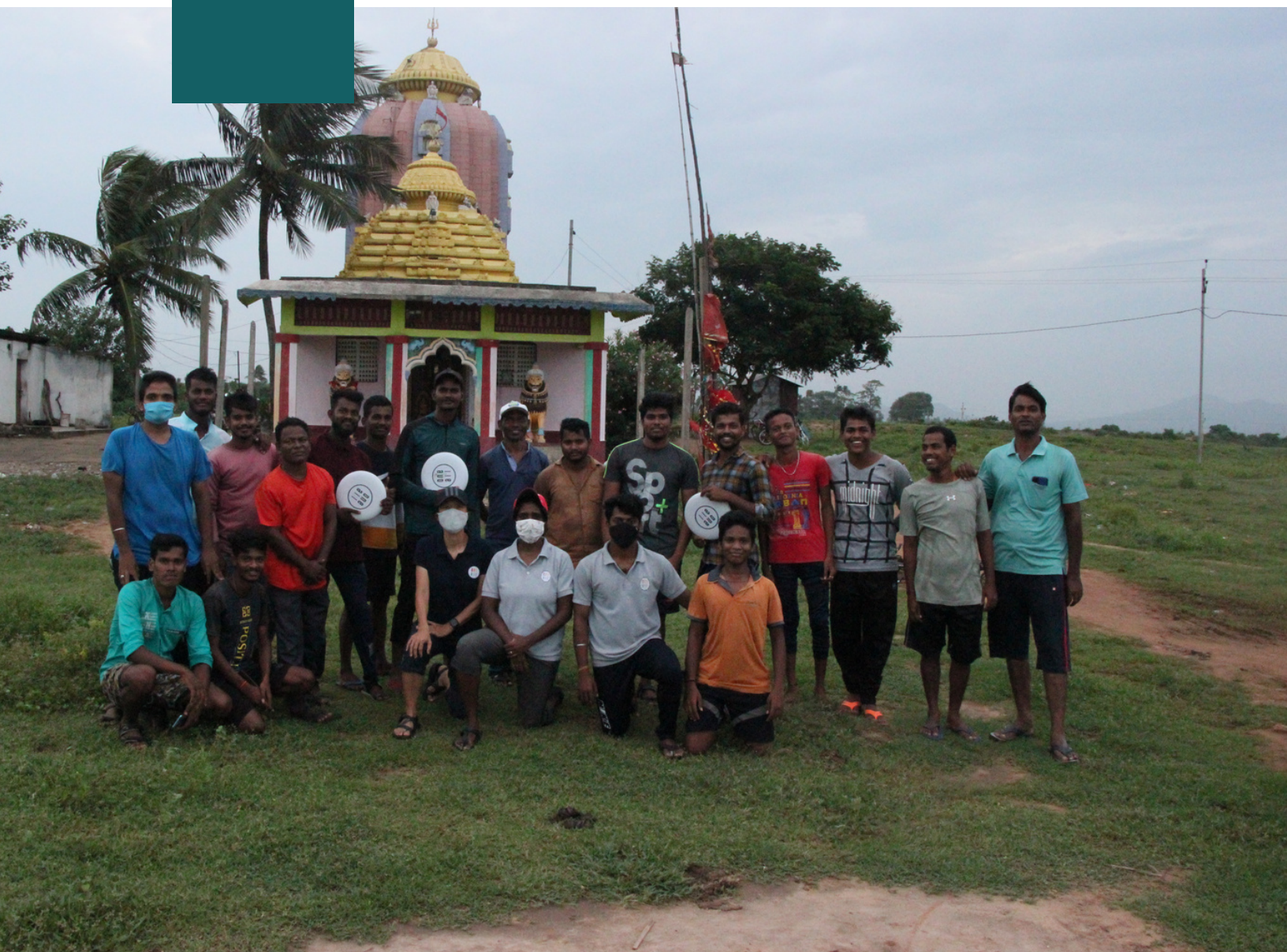


UNDERSTANDING THE LEVELS OF ACCESS TO AND ENGAGEMENT IN SPORTS IN FISHING COMMUNITIES IN GANJAM, ODISHA

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COMMUNITY WELLBEING & ENVIRONMENT
PROGRAMME

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Executive summary

In 2021, Dakshin Foundation introduced the 'Sports and Community Wellbeing' programme in order to address the rise of developmental and wellbeing-related issues amongst communities in coastal areas of the country. These issues have been exacerbated by the changing landscapes in these geographies, facilitated by the industrialisation and mechanisation of fishing, the conversion of coastal commons for infrastructure, aquaculture and tourism development purposes.

In order to facilitate the growth of this programme, our team conducted a scoping study in Odisha in August and September 2021 to develop an understanding of the current levels of access to and engagement in sports and outdoor recreational activities amongst youth and children in two communities. Along with this study, we also conducted a three-day ultimate frisbee demonstration workshop with youth and children in Purnabandha and Nolia Nuagaon, to introduce them to the sport, and provide a preliminary idea of what to expect in the coming years.

The response to the idea of the programme was very encouraging. While the current levels of access to structured sporting opportunities are low, especially outside of educational institutions, the levels of enthusiasm are very high and promising. The potential for the growth and impact of the programme are very high in both Purnabandha and Nolia Nuagaon, but there are also significant issues that would need to be addressed to encourage youth and children to participate in the growth and development of this programme and use it as a tool to facilitate their own growth as well as the development of their communities.

1.0 Introduction

There has been a dramatic change along India's coastline in the last two-to-three decades, and the communities who live along the coast and in India's island systems have witnessed a rapid change in these landscapes. These communities, who depend mostly on fishing as a primary source of income, have been witness to and are suffering the consequences of the mechanisation and industrialisation of fisheries, as well as the conversion of coastal commons for infrastructure, aquaculture or tourism development. These numerous factors have resulted in poor conservation outcomes, reduced food security and widespread livelihood concerns.

There have been attempts to mitigate these issues. However, these have mostly involved the removal of these communities from these environments and restricting their use of biodiversity and natural resources. This displacement feeds into a destruction of the linkages between these people and their environments, and a larger loss of identity across these communities (Giles-Corti and Donovan, 2002; Ding Ding et al, 2012).

In this context, Dakshin Foundation aims to tap into the power of youth in these coastal communities and provide them with the tools and resources that they could use to foster and nurture deeper connections between themselves, and the environments and communities that surround them. The organisation aims to do so by providing place-based education and experiential learning opportunities while simultaneously tapping into the existing interests and aspirations of these communities. One of the primary tools that we plan to use in this regard is sports and outdoor-based physical activities, to not only improve physical health and wellbeing among the youth of these communities, but also to help foster deeper connections to the natural environments that surround them (Cox et al, 2006; Harrington et al, 2017).

Before implementing the project in our field sites, we conducted scoping studies to understand existing interest in sports, and organisation of and facilities for sports in our field sites in the Andaman Islands and Odisha. In January 2021, the Andamans study was conducted, which raised the importance of collaborating with local institutions and organisations like youth clubs to facilitate the development of this programme (Srinivasan and Sachidanand, 2021). This study was also used as a tool to understand what factors affect the participation of youth and children in these communities in sports and outdoor recreational activities. Through this study, we also developed an understanding of some of the current basic needs of these groups, which will help us design our interventions to make them more relevant, which would also encourage youth and children to participate in these activities.

This study was conducted in two sites in the state of Odisha along the eastern coast of India – Purnabandha and Nolia Nuagaon. These sites were chosen because of Dakshin Foundation's long-term association with these communities. Purnabandha is an estuarine fishing village at the mouth of the Rushikulya estuary. Nolia Nuagaon is a marine fishing village situated south of the Rushikulya estuary.

This report helps provide an understanding of how youth in Purnabandha and Nolia Nuagaon in Odisha engage in sports and recreational activities, as well as their interest in facilitating and participating in activities to improve their communities. This report will also identify key action points and the direction of the sports programme in the short and medium-term.

2.0 Background: Programme Overview

The primary goal of Dakshin's 'Sports and Community Wellbeing' programme is to use sports to (a) improve the general health and wellbeing of fishing communities through outdoor and recreational sports interventions; and (b) facilitate conversations around social and environmental issues and promote engagement with those issues. The programme will attempt to create experiential and place-based curricula that could improve community cohesion and rebuild youth and children's appreciation of their natural environment.

For this programme, we aim to use sports such as football, volleyball and ultimate frisbee, and develop an integrated sports-based curriculum to connect these sports to the specific place-based environmental and social issues that are faced by the local communities. Other outdoor activities like kayaking, surfing, scuba and freediving, rock-climbing and bouldering will also be used to directly communicate the importance of the outdoor environment and the need for sustainable livelihoods. We envision using sports as an entry point for discussions about the environment, society, culture, and even conventional education subjects, such as mathematics and the sciences.

The activities in the programme will include capacity-building programmes with certain individuals and groups within the communities so that they can be given the opportunity to run smaller programmes along these lines in other areas within their respective regions. The broader aim is to revitalise interest in coastal commons as physical spaces, which will boost these communities' pride in the surrounding natural spaces and work for their protection. In some parts of the country, traditional fishing methods involve an element of athleticism and adventure, (eg. freediving in Palk Bay) and interest in these traditional fishing methods could be restored and reignited by drawing parallels to these elements through the use of certain sports.

The flowchart below is a visual illustration of how this project will help in the development of a sports-based programme. By assessing the nature and level of the engagement of youth in sports currently, we can develop a baseline understanding of their current levels of access to sports, which will help us design activities and initiatives accordingly, and make things conducive for their participation in the 'intervention' stage. Similarly, assessing their current levels of participation and stewardship of their communities would help us design activities that could build on their current levels of interest and engagement in their respective communities.

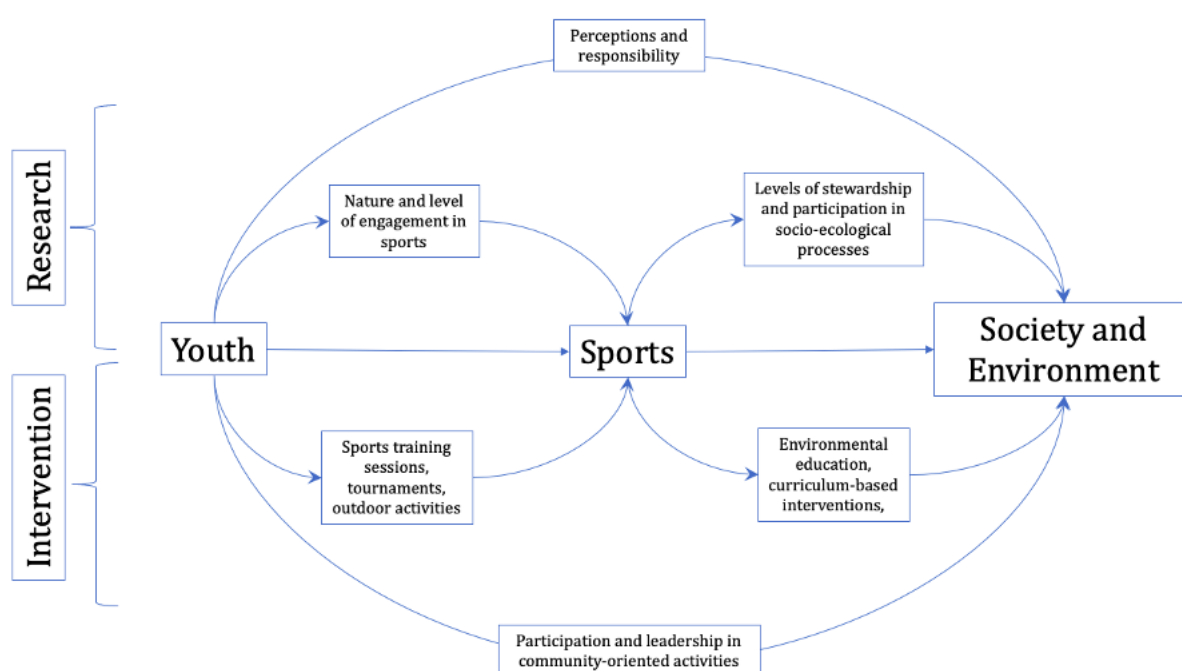


Fig. 1: Flowchart depicting plan of 'Sports and Community Wellbeing Programme

To summarise, the programme aims to provide youth from coastal villages with gender-equal and supportive spaces to nurture their physical talents, self-esteem, confidence and individual and community wellbeing. It aims to empower local youth to participate in and lead a range of social and environmental activities, with sports as a unifying platform. It aims to foster deeper connections between coastal communities and the natural environments that surround them. It aims to equip youth in coastal communities with skills and knowledge that would enable them to pursue other livelihood options (eg. sustainable and low-impact tourism ventures). It also aims to establish a scalable model that eventually benefits tens of thousands of children in coastal India.

In order to implement this programme, Dakshin Foundation has partnered with One All – a not-for-profit non-governmental organisation that uses ultimate frisbee as a tool to educate youth and children about life skills such as confidence, teamwork and relationship building. The objective of this partnership is to work with One-All to conduct their ultimate frisbee training activities in our field sites – Purnabandha and Nolia Nuagaon – to bolster self-confidence, decision-making skills and sensitise youth to issues of gender and sexuality.

During this visit to Purnabandha and Nolia Nuagaon, we conducted a three-day pilot frisbee training programme with youth and children from the two villages, to introduce them to the sport of ultimate frisbee, and to provide them with an experience of the programme. As part of this, a team from One All visited our Odisha sites and spent one day in Nolia Nuagaon and two days in Purnabandha, where they conducted frisbee demo sessions with youth and children and spoke to stakeholders from these communities.

3.0 Objectives

This report aims to develop an understanding of levels of access to and participation in sports and outdoor recreational activities by youth in specific fishing communities of Ganjam, Odisha while also aiming to understand how they perceive and interact with their social and environmental surroundings. This will help us design and implement our sports-based interventions in a manner that builds on their existing level of awareness and current perceptions.

The specific **objectives** of the study are:

1. to develop an understanding of how youth in fishing villages of Ganjam engage in sports and other outdoor activities, and how much access they have to spaces/facilities that allow them to play sports.
2. to explore social factors that determine what sports youth do or do not play, and how these influence their engagement.
3. to develop an understanding of how youth from coastal communities perceive their responsibility towards their social and environmental surroundings.

4.0 Methods

Site descriptions

Purnabandha:

Purnabandha is an estuarine fishing village in the Ganjam district of Odisha. The fishers from the village fish in the Rushikulya estuary. The families in Purnabandha are predominantly Odia speaking, but there are also a number of Telugu speaking households within the village. The Rushikulya river mouth forms an estuary and creates sandbars and beaches which is one of the best-known mass nesting sites for olive ridley turtles. To the east of the village, there is a Maa Gangadevi temple towards the sea, and this site is used by villagers for many of their social and cultural gatherings. The flow of the Rushikulya river keeps shifting and changing the landscape of the neighbouring lands and has often forced the villagers to adapt to these changes by altering their land-use patterns.

Through this scoping study, we found that fishing is the most prominent occupation in Purnabandha and that many of the families are involved in estuarine fishing in the Rushikulya river. Outside of fishing, individuals from the village are also involved in other professions, as traders, shop owners and government workers, amongst others.



Img. 1. List of important sites in Odisha

Nolia Nuagaon:

Nolia Nuagaon is a marine fishing village in the Ganjam district of Odisha, south of Purnabandha and the Rushikulya river. Nolia Nuagaon is a much larger village than Purnabandha, with a larger population. Through this scoping study, we found that fishing is the most prominent occupation in Nolia Nuagaon and that many of the families are involved in fishing in the Bay of Bengal.

In both Purnabandha and Nolia Nuagaon, the men usually go out on the boats and catch the fish while the women market and sell the catch. All the youth and children in the village have given significant importance to education of late; they take little to no interest in fishing and are more interested in finding a job and a profession that would allow them to move away from these villages towards larger cities in the country, such as Bangalore, Chennai or Mumbai.

Data collection

The first phase of the study, conducted between December 2020 and January 2021, involved discussions with staff members within Dakshin Foundation who were able to provide inputs on identifying respondents in the designated study sites. As part of this stage of data collection, informal and semi-structured conversations were conducted with Dakshin staff who have prior experience working in the field sites in Odisha and were familiar with the project sites and the communities, as well as the concept and rationale of the 'Sports and Community Wellbeing' programme.

Field interviews were conducted between August and September 2021, by means of semi-structured interviews in two sites: Purnabandha and Nolia Nuagaon. A total of 14 interviews and 6 group discussions were carried out across the two study sites, with respondents from local youth clubs, government bodies and educational institutions. Respondents also included youth club members and local youth actively involved in sports. College students, temple committee members, local grocery store owners, fishers, health workers and local journalists were among the respondents. In addition to the interviews and the group discussions, informal conversations were also conducted with youth during the ultimate frisbee demo sessions.

The collected data was analysed manually by categorising the information under themes that were identified and aligned with the objectives of this study. The primary themes were:

- Youth clubs – institutions, structure and activities
- Engagement of youth in sports and outdoor activities
- Access to spaces where sports could be played
- Gender dynamics
- Youth interests - professional interests and challenges faced by youth

5.0 Results

5.1. Youth clubs:

There were no active youth clubs in either Purnabandha or Nolia Nuagaon. One respondent mentioned that one used to be active in Purnabandha – Digvijay Youth Club – and that there used to be another club associated with the Maa Gangadevi temple to the east, but that has also not been active for a number of years. Before they became inactive, these youth clubs were involved in activities such as blood donation camps, health workshops, cleanup drives along the beaches and tree plantation drives. However, these activities have not been conducted in a long time.

Youth respondents mentioned that there were multiple reasons for the youth clubs being inactive. Many of the youth have recognised that there are little to no livelihood opportunities for them in their villages outside of fishing, and they do not view fishing as a sustainable or lucrative livelihood. Several of the youth look to immediately migrate out of their villages to bigger towns and cities for work as soon as they achieve a basic educational level. Thus, they are not keen on investing time and effort into the betterment of their communities.

Youth from the village raised the issue of lack of awareness about the purpose of the youth clubs and questioned whether they could make a difference in their communities through these clubs. One of the youth respondents specifically mentioned that they felt that they would not get support from the other communities within the village and would not get the freedom to introduce changes. Logistical issues such as the limited funding of these clubs, along with a lack of awareness about how to register these clubs and conduct activities, were also cited as reasons for why youth from the village were not interested in youth clubs and associated activities.

Instead of the youth clubs, there are one or two temple committees that are associated with the local temples in Purnabandha, who have taken up social responsibilities in lieu of these youth clubs. Much of the work done by these temple committees include infrastructure and community development such as road construction and the distribution of health and ration cards. There is also a village committee present in Purnabandha, that is also involved in decision-making in the village to a certain extent.

Various governmental and non-governmental village institutions conduct a significant amount of work for the betterment of their communities through infrastructure development, cleanliness drives and blood donation camps, as well as a range of other activities. However, there is a distinct lack of agency given to the younger populations in these communities, as these institutions mostly comprise middle-aged individuals, who are mostly male. The prevailing perception amongst members of the communities, and the youth themselves, is that most youth will be migrating out of Purnabandha to find more viable livelihoods in other parts of the country, and thus are not interested in various village-level activities as it is of little relevance to them and their lives.

5.2. Engagement levels in sports and outdoors:

Purnabandha

The sports that are the most popular in Purnabandha are a local variation of volleyball called 'daaba' and cricket. Daaba is mostly played by the older men who are working professionals and fishers, while cricket is played by the youth and children. Other activities that are popular amongst the youth and children in Purnabandha are athletics, including distance running, long jump, high jump and javelin and throw events, as these activities are necessary to qualify for selection in services such as the police, the armed forces, or the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). These services are popular livelihood and career option amongst the families and communities in Purnabandha, as they involve a government job that would provide long-term financial stability and a guaranteed income even after retirement, through pension schemes.

Daaba is played on a volleyball court within Purnabandha, while cricket is played on an open field on the banks of the Rushikulya. There used to be a larger field that was frequently used for sports and athletics training, but due to a lack of maintenance and the shifting flow of the Rushikulya river, this land has fallen into disuse, forcing local youth to use another plot of land that is more uneven and overgrown with bushes and shrubs. Cricket is played on these grounds daily.



Img. 2. Youth playing cricket in the evening in Purnabandha

There is little support extended to these youth and children for sports in the form of training or funding from the government and the communities in general. The lack of clubs and other similar youth institutions also means that there is little structure provided to these youth outside of schools and tuitions. Discussions with government authorities in Purnabandha indicated that there was little funding provided to local government institutions, and the funding that was available was rarely if ever, diverted to improving

sports infrastructure or providing sports-based opportunities and training to youth and children in the village.

Due to a lack of support and investment towards sports, the youth in Purnabandha have an interesting relationship with sports and recreational activities. While there is a genuine interest in sports such as cricket, there is little interest in getting better at the sport or playing it correctly, as youth were observed playing cricket, but using the incorrect techniques. They mentioned that they never received coaching and mostly learnt how to play by watching cricket on television. They also mentioned that they were not particularly interested in learning the correct techniques, as their daily cricket gatherings were 'just for fun'. It seemed like the youth in Purnabandha had no interest in getting better at playing sports for recreational purposes and would only pursue a sport more avidly if it bolstered their chances to play a sport at a higher level and as a livelihood or career option. This focus on income is part of a larger pattern that was evident across the communities in Purnabandha, as the poverty in the region forced the families and community members to place immense amounts of time, energy and focus on earning money and ensuring that they have means to place food on their plate on a day-to-day basis.

Nolia Nuagaon:

The youth and children in Nuagaon are active and are interested in sports like football, volleyball, and cricket. Similar to Purnabandha, the youth in Nolia Nuagaon are also interested in athletics-related activities as it could increase the chances of them getting selected in services such as the armed forces or the police. The spaces that are mostly used for sports are the beach and a large football field towards the outskirts of the village.

When compared to Purnabandha, Nolia Nuagaon is significantly closer to the beach, and consequently, youth and children were observed using the beach as a play area much more when compared to the youth from the former. Key informants in Nuagaon also mentioned that the youth and the children in the village were interested in swimming and would be keen to explore watersports. One respondent mentioned that children also use the shore seine netting as a tool to play along the beaches and in the water. These spaces are also not entirely suitable for regular sports use. The field is uneven and overgrown in patches and is likely to cause injuries amongst the youth and children.



Img. 3. Youth in Nolia Nuagaon warming up before a football game

There was little to no formal training provided to the youth and children in Nuagaon for any of the sports they were interested in. There was little support extended for playing any of these sports from the local government or the schools, and children were mostly expected to learn how to play these sports themselves and build their interests on their own. In Nolia Nuagaon, some of the older youth who were actively involved in sports had arranged for one of their friends from Berhampur who had played semi-competitive football to visit Nolia Nuagaon occasionally and run informal coaching sessions with youth and children. Often, the older youth step in and give advice to the youngsters on matters of technique and rules. Several of the youth mentioned that they would have liked to pursue sports and athletics competitively from a younger age, but they were not provided access to platforms where they could explore these interests.

All the equipment purchased for this regular play is self-funded. There were reports of instances where they had to cancel a game of cricket because none of the players had the required equipment.

5.3. Gender dynamics in Purnabandha and Nolia Nuagaon:

There were very visible gender-based divisions within the communities in both Purnabandha and Nolia Nuagaon. Women interviewed as part of this study indicated that there were multiple aspects of their lives that were heavily gendered and determined by societal norms for what was expected of young girls and women. While it was acceptable for young girls to play with their male counterparts, it was deemed unacceptable for the older girls and women to play sports with or participate in any mixed-gender activities. As they get older, it is instead expected that the girls would focus more on education and assisting with housework to better prepare them for married life. In the case of these women, the purpose of education is not to increase their qualifications for various jobs and livelihood opportunities, but to simply increase their eligibility to ensure that they can marry into a more financially well-off or more reputable family. It was also interesting to note that many of the women and young girls interviewed had little to no aspirations and claimed that they would be satisfied with merely marrying into a wealthy family and working at home. Some women claimed that this is because of the lack of support extended to women, and the lack of impetus meant that they were not aware of too many opportunities and activities that they could take up to expand their horizons. In Nolia Nuagaon, one respondent mentioned that amongst 200 or so households in Nolia Nuagaon, only 2 or 3 parents want their daughters to participate in higher education and get jobs and earn money, but they lack support, and their voices are often drowned out in the face of the overwhelming pressure from their society.

While most men in the village would look to migrate out of Purnabandha for work, the women are expected to remain at home and look after their families. Younger women around the age of 15 or 16 from less financially stable backgrounds regularly travel to nearby factory towns such as Gopalpur and Visakhapatnam to work in factories such as shrimp processing factories and bolster their family incomes. By the time they are 21, it is expected that all these women should be married and working at home. Through our conversations with women from the village, there was also mention of the fact that child marriage used to be rampant in Purnabandha previously, but that has reduced drastically due to the efforts of the Child Marriage Committee and the Child Development Project Officer (CDPO). However, in Nolia Nuagaon, the phenomenon of child marriage has not been entirely eradicated, and there have been reports of young girls getting married at the ages of 15 and 16. Multiple respondents in the village mentioned that it would bring shame to the family if the girls were not married by the age of 25.

The women in both Purnabandha and Nolia Nuagaon are also excluded from most of the decision-making aspects in the village. The panchayat and village committee are comprised exclusively of men and women are only included in these meetings when they bring issues to these institutions. A few of the female respondents mentioned that the conditions for women have improved somewhat in the last five to ten years. Some of the older women we spoke to mentioned that they do not want their daughters to lead the lives that they were forced into and would attempt to take steps to provide their daughters with the freedom that they were not allowed in their own childhood.

5.4. Other youth interests in Purnabandha and Nolia Nuagaon:

While the older men in the village are mostly involved in estuarine fishing in Purnabandha, the youth from the village seemed to show no interest in taking up fishing in the longer term. Several youth respondents mentioned that they were more interested in applying for government services such as the armed forces, the police or the CRPF. Those who were unsuccessful in these attempts at joining the services instead turned to other occupations and jobs that would allow them to migrate out of Purnabandha to larger cities in other parts of the country. These included jobs such as electricians, plumbers and other occupations within the service industry in big cities. These opportunities were not only viewed as more lucrative when compared to fishing, but they were also perceived as being a way to move away from Purnabandha and lead a more rewarding life elsewhere. From their perspective, there were little to no rewards or incentives to stay in Purnabandha and invest in the village.

For the families of these young men, perspectives towards this pattern of migration were a little more nuanced. The income earned by these youth were sent back to the families, and this migration is crucial to the capacity of the families to feed themselves. While they were cognizant of this fact, some of the older respondents mentioned that it is a shame that these youth must resort to leaving their homes and families to earn more money. Two of the female respondents who were mothers mentioned that these migration patterns often lead to an erosion in family values amongst these youth, and often enable them to get involved in more damaging lifestyles in the bigger towns and cities – sometimes getting into habits of alcohol and drug abuse.

Within Purnabandha, some youth mentioned that they were interested in contributing towards the wellbeing of their communities by participating in and organising cleanliness drives and blood donation camps but could not pursue these efforts because they lacked the support or guidance to pursue any of these activities. On the other hand, some of the older people in the village repeatedly mentioned that these youth have no interest in contributing to the communities, so there was little point in trying to involve them, especially since they would be leaving Purnabandha in the coming years anyway.

5.5. Potential challenges:

These are some of the potential challenges that could arise while implementing a sports programme in our field sites in Odisha:

- **Engaging with schools and parents to increase room for recreation amongst the youth and children:** The financial constraints on the families in Purnabandha and Nolia Nuagaon mean that there is significant familial pressure on these youth and children, and creates an environment where recreational forms of play are viewed as unconstructive. In these spaces, Dakshin Foundation will also have to conduct sessions with local educators and parents to inform them about the potential benefits of the programme.
- **Equal gender involvement:** Both Purnabandha and Nolia Nuagaon are villages where the societies are structured in a way that removes agency from women and young girls and prevents them from taking up any active roles within their communities. Creating equal opportunities and involvement in sports and outdoor activities is central to Dakshin's 'Sports and Community Wellbeing' programme, and thus it is even more important to create avenues to facilitate the involvement of women and young girls in sports activities at these sites.

6.0 Frisbee demonstration sessions with One All:

During this visit to the Odisha field sites, the team from One-All also joined the Dakshin team and spent three days in Purnabandha and Nolia Nuagaon. The partnership with the One-All team was facilitated to bring their expertise and experience in conducting sports-based life skills educational programmes, using ultimate frisbee as a platform. One-All focuses on relationship building, gender sensitisation, sexual and reproductive health and healthy interpersonal communication skills.



Img 4,5 and 6. Frisbee demonstration sessions in Nolia Nuagaon

Of the three days, one day was spent in Nolia Nuagaon and two days were spent in Purnabandha. The session in Nolia Nuagaon was slightly curtailed due to rain, but thanks to the enthusiastic participation of local youth, the session was held indoors in the local community hall/cyclone shelter. Over the course of these three days, semi-formal interviews and group discussions were conducted with women and young girls in the villages to understand some of the issues faced by them, both within and outside the realm of sports. Alongside these interviews, ultimate frisbee demo sessions were organised to give youth and children (both male and female) from the villages an idea of what we could offer through this sports-based programme and provide an insight into the sport of ultimate frisbee itself. Over the three days, we had approximately 100 participants between the ages of 5 and 25. The word for these sessions was spread through key informants and tuition teachers in the villages. Participants were split into two groups – those roughly below the age of 15, and those

above. There were no women amongst the older age groups, but there were several younger girls who were keen and active amongst the younger groups. Conversations with the tuition teachers and schoolteachers prior to the demo sessions were extremely helpful, as the teachers encouraged their students to come participate in these sessions and learn a new sport.



Img 4,5 and 6. Frisbee demonstration sessions in Purnabandha

The response to these sessions was very encouraging. There were two sessions in Purnabandha and several children and youth returned for the second day. There were several more participants in Purnabandha on the second day, as children had spread the word amongst their circles and their friends, who were all keen on learning a new sport. A few youth mentioned that it had been a long time since someone had taken the time to teach them a new sport, so their interest was piqued.

While the response from the children and the older youth was mostly positive, a small number of the older male youth seemed disinterested in learning a new sport and were not willing to learn the rules and technique of a sport. The content of these demonstration sessions was mostly technique, and it was difficult to run ultimate frisbee matches. One of the participants commented that they had lost interest in the session because it did not capture their interest and was not as active as they were hoping.

7.0 Way forward

In the coming months, Dakshin Foundation will be building on this scoping study by furthering the partnership with One-All and planning longer-term activities to introduce ultimate frisbee to youth and children in Odisha. Simultaneously, we will also be conducting sports-based activities and sessions in our sites in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and expanding the scope for the 'Sports and Community Wellbeing' programme in other sites along the Indian coastline and in the island systems. We plan to implement this programme in a sustainable and engaging manner through the following steps:

- **One-All visit to Chennai and developing ultimate frisbee plans:** To implement the ultimate frisbee activities in collaboration with One-All, a team from Dakshin Foundation will visit One-All's project sites in Chennai and Gudalur to observe how they run their programmes. Following these visits, we will plan and develop interventions along with One-All to determine the issues we could address through ultimate frisbee and the target audiences at our field sites in the medium- to long-term.
- **Explore options to provide livelihood options through sport:** As the focus of most youth in Odisha is towards livelihoods, it would be valuable to explore options and systems through which we could use sports to create new avenues for these youth and children to gain jobs and earn money through their involvement in the sports sector.
- **Overlap with other Dakshin activities in the 'Sea Change' space:** This programme will be developed alongside Dakshin's other programmes addressing health, livelihoods, education and ecological and fisheries sustainability. In order to provide more exposure to youth and children in these coastal communities, we will also be exploring overlaps and interlinkages between these various programmes, and how sports could be used to bring these goals together.
- **Other sports and activities:** There is potential in Odisha to explore watersports such as surfing, scuba diving and kayaking, as well as other outdoor activities such as climbing and skateboarding. On this front, we will continue exploring how to incorporate these, along with sports such as football and volleyball, into Dakshin's 'Sports and Community Wellbeing' programme.
- **Consultations with key informants before implementation:** Prior to actually introducing these activities in-person, we will have extended conversations with Dakshin staff working in the field as well as our key informants in Purnabandha and Nolia Nuagaon, in order to get their feedback and possible suggestions on how to make the programme more effective and meaningful for participants. Their involvement in these decision-making processes is crucial for the long-term growth and development of this programme.

8.0 Conclusion

This scoping study, conducted in Odisha between August and September, 2021, helped us develop an understanding of the role of youth in these communities, along with their current levels of engagement in and access to sports. The overall response to the idea of Dakshin's 'Sports and Community Wellbeing' programme was positive, and several issues were also raised that this programme could help address. Some of the gaps in the communities in Odisha include the lack of direction and guidance for youth, migration of youth to larger cities for jobs, poverty and the lack of local livelihood options for communities in the area. With regards to sports and outdoor-based activities specifically, we found that sports are played purely recreationally and are viewed as relatively unimportant beyond these recreational purposes. In this context, there is scope for the programme to provide new areas for the growth and development of these youth and children by providing them a safe space to explore their interests and pick up life skills as well as technical skills that could help them grow in different ways and contribute to their communities. By facilitating tie-ups with other sub-programmes within Dakshin's 'Sea Change' framework, we could also provide support these communities in other ways.

Supporting youth health and well-being is paramount as youth are agents of change and bearers of local knowledge in fishing communities. Given the already existing interest in sports amongst youth in coastal communities, there is vast potential in channelling this interest and energy into contributing to and participating in their respective communities. Therefore, considering the scope of sports, it is essential now more than ever to explore its potential in contributing to healthy communities by focusing on individual physical and mental well-being and community cohesion.

9.0 References

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