

On 15 October 2025, Prof. Nibedita Ray-Bennett and Dr. Hideyuki Shiroshta (founders of ADN), along with Ms. Usha Behera and Mr. Blorin Mohanty from Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti (BGVS), visited Raipur Gram Panchayat (GP) in Puroshotampur Block, Ganjam District, Odisha. Ganjam comprises 22 blocks, 547 GPs, and 3,013 villages.

At the GP office, the team met with 13 BGVS volunteers from eight blocks. Mr. Anil Behera, one of the volunteers, coordinated the outreach workshop. This GP was selected due to BGVS's strong ties with the Sarpanch and its robust network, making it a suitable site for establishing a Case Station for Avoidable Deaths (CaSA). Additionally, the GP is located near the frequently flooding River Rushkuliya.

Mr. Behera invited ADN Ambassadors from existing CaSA areas, Chochina, Su Mondal, and Burujhira, but only one attended. The workshop drew 35-40 local participants, ranging in age from 10 to approximately 55 years, including farmers and daily wage earners.

The session began with an introduction to ADN, its objectives, and the workshop's purpose. To build rapport, participants were asked to identify deaths they considered avoidable. They cited road traffic accidents, snakebites, drowning, maternal deaths during childbirth, and starvation, often sharing personal experiences.



The workshop addressed myths and misconceptions about snakes and snakebites, including insights from Talukdar et al. (2025) on the “decapitated snakehead.” The importance of the “golden hour” was emphasised—patients bitten by venomous snakes should receive anti-venom within 60 minutes. Dr. Shiroshta drew parallels with tsunami evacuation, noting Japan's 90-minute golden hour. Participants also had the opportunity to ask questions. One participant asked, ‘What to do if bitten by a snake in the field?’

Ms. Usha Behera translated for Drs. Ray-Bennett and Shiroshta, and used music to engage participants, skillfully integrating songs during topic transitions. This demonstrated music's effectiveness in science communication when timed and paced appropriately.

At the end, Drs. Ray-Bennett and Shiroshta presented ADN's slogan poster, “**Disaster Deaths are Avoidable,**” to the Sarpanch, who agreed to raise awareness in monthly ward meetings.

Following the workshop, the team met with the 13 BGVS volunteers, who expressed strong interest in supporting ADN's outreach in the block.



XXX¹ HIGH SCHOOL

The team then visited XXX High School, which offers classes from 5 to 10. The school operates from 10:30 AM to 4:00 PM. Located XXX km from River Rushkuliya and XXX km from the Bay of Bengal, the school is vulnerable to floods and cyclones.

Surrounded by villages, the school provides midday meals six days a week - three days with vegetables and three with eggs. Drs. Ray-Bennett and Shiroshta met the female Head Teacher to explore hosting a CaSA. Dr. Shiroshta shared the example of Hama Elementary School in Izumiotsu, Osaka, Japan, a CaSA for tsunami deaths.

School staff identified drugs, gutkha (smokeless tobacco), and road traffic accidents as key risks for the children. The Head Teacher mentioned a student had

¹ XXX: Information purposely removed.

a road accident that morning. Teachers also reported five or six snakes on the premises and advised children to be cautious.

The academic year runs from 1 April to 31 March, with holidays in:

- Summer (first week of May to 18 June),
- Autumn (10 days in September/ October for Durga Puja), and
- Winter (21 December to 2 January).
- Annual exams occur in the first two weeks of March, followed by marking.
- Weekly, each class engages in gardening and extracurricular activities.

It was proposed that CaSA activities be showcased in January, aligning with Hama Elementary's schedule. Preparation would begin in July, allowing Class XXX students to work weekly for six months. A two-hour refresher workshop for Class XXX was also discussed to reinforce learning and empower students as Ambassadors for change.

After meeting with the Head Teacher, Drs. Ray-Bennett and Shiroshita conducted a workshop for Class XXX students on the school's raised stage (*mandap*). Over XXX children participated, seated in separate rows for boys and girls. Ms. Usha Behera facilitated in Odiya, using music to maintain engagement.

The children were lively and curious, actively participating in quizzes on snakebite myths, a story about a decapitated snakehead, and reflective questions: "What is the purpose of studying?" and "Why do you come to school?" Responses included: "To get a good job," "To make my country proud," and "To learn and be a good citizen."



Dr. Shiroshita emphasised that knowledge gained should be shared. When asked whom they would share it with, children replied: "parents," "friends," "neighbors," and "relatives." When asked if they enjoyed the workshop, the response was a resounding "Yes." Many

volunteered to become ADN Ambassadors. The team left feeling energised and inspired.

After lunch at a local dhaba run by a BGVS volunteer, the team reflected on the day. They agreed the school was an ideal CaSA site due to its central location and student representation from multiple villages.

In contrast, the village-level CaSA model (Chachina, Su Mondol, Burujhari) faced challenges due to low motivation and the departure of ADN Coordinator Mr. Rajesh Patra, along with the discontinuation of the ADN India Hub at the Orissa State Volunteers Social Workers Association. This visit and workshops were made possible through a new collaboration with BGVS.

ACTION POINTS IDENTIFIED:

- BGVS to obtain written permission from the Head Teacher to host CaSA.
- Form a CaSA Committee comprising:
 - I. One Class XXX teacher,
 - II. Head Teacher,
 - III. Extracurricular activity teacher,
 - IV. BGVS volunteer as CaSA Coordinator,
 - V. Two or three Class XXX students as Ambassadors,
 - VI. ADN Presidents, and
 - VII. up to three ADN Future Leaders (UK, Japan, KIIT) to support with research and communication materials.
- The committee will plan annual activities and develop a six-month action plan in June/July, identifying required resources.
- Weekly CaSA activities to begin in July, monitored by the committee, especially the field coordinator and Future Leaders.
- If more than three or four CaSAs are established at schools or colleges, knowledge exchange and mentoring should be prioritized.
- The January showcase should involve parents, local officials, media, and students from all years. The Head Teacher, in consultation with the committee, may invite other schools to enhance visibility and impact.

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