

Navjyothi (NJSS)

Yearly Update for the year 2025-2026

August 2026

Important Documents for Annual Review

- Yearly Progress Report: [Progress Report 2025-26](#)
 - Report was prepared by a former ASV student who has gone to Bhopal for further studies (Azim Premji Foundation)
- Latest site visit by Arti Pandey in Summer 2025: [Site Report](#) ; [Blog article](#)
- Budget for current year has been provided: [Budget 2026-27](#)
- Fund Utilization Report for last year has been requested
 - Audited Report of Asha Trust is typically ready after October
 - Last years report has been provided

Background of Navjyothi (NJSS)

- This project is located in rural areas near the city of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh
- The area is famous for the Banarasi sari weaving industry. Most of the weavers are illiterate and very poor and most children in the area worked with their families in the local sari weaving industry
- Nandlalji started teaching kids from the neighborhood in 1994 and that is why he is called Nandlal Master or Masterji.
- He first started teaching with an informal teaching center in the evening with four children from Nagepur village. This inspired other youth in the neighboring villages to start teaching children in their villages. This effort over the years ramped up to support 10 such schools – 2 day schools and 8 night schools, without any outside support. These centers have now stopped and children have been integrated into ASV school or government schools nearby
- Three major initiatives are run by Navjyothi – Asha Samajik Vidyalaya, Kishori Kendras and Self-Help Groups with Austin supporting the first two initiatives

Asha Samajik Vidyalyaya



Asha Samajik Vidyalaya

- Asha Chicago first started supporting the Asha Samajik Vidyalaya in 1999
- This is a regular day school, and it is located on land that was donated by Nandlalji to Asha Trust
- The school has been registered officially under the Right to Education Act
 - School building with library and computer room
 - Separate toilets for boys and girls
- There were 273 students in the last academic year from LKG to Class 8
- Various School Functions are celebrated like Independence Day, Republic Day, Gandhi Jayanti, Children's Day and other religious & social events
- Children are taught about issues relating to Gender, Human Rights, Child Rights, Domestic Violence & other social issues
- School timings: Summer – 8 am to 1 pm; Winter – 9 am to 2 pm

ASV School Updates (1)

- School provides education from LKG to Grade 8
- No of students: 273
 - Boys: 155, Girls: 119
- April is when the new session starts with summer break from May 20th – June 30th
- Half yearly exams were conducted in Nov
- Bal Mela was organized for the children
- NCERT books were distributed to students in grade 6, 7 and 8. The CLE team (from Bangalore) provided online classes in English, Mathematics, and Science to students these grades



ASV School Updates (2)

- Celebrated different national and religious holidays
 - Independence Day, Republic Day, Children's Day, Gandhi Jayanthi, etc
- Science lab was actively used for hands-on learning. Sports and film were incorporated as learning methods
- Older girls were educated about menstrual health and hygiene. Also sanitary pads were distributed.
- Students participated in tree-planting and care activities within the school premises to foster environmental responsibility



ASV School Updates (3)

- The school's girls' kabaddi team performed with distinction in the interschool competition.
- Through a partnership with Feeding India, all students receive a cooked breakfast and mid-day meal daily, resulting in marked improvement in attendance and concentration.
- A comprehensive health check-up was organized for all students in partnership with Feeding India
- A delegation of teachers and students from Denmark visited Asha School and gifted shoes and socks to all students.





Kishori Kendra

Kishori Shiksha Kendra

- Kishori Shiksha Kendra or Kishori Sewing Center is a program which targets adolescent girls who have never been to school and some who are recently married
- Provides them with basic education, health camps, training in sewing & embroidery, awareness about their rights and other ways to empower them
- They organize a summer camp for girls where they provide training for computer work, handicrafts, beautician, martial arts, dance, painting, scooter or bike driving.
- NJSS is currently running 18 sewing centers with Asha Austin supporting 10 sewing centers with around ~400 teenage girls attending



Kishori Kendra Updates (1)

- 18 different centers – 400 girls – training in sewing and embroidery
- On Menstrual Hygiene Day – rallies were organized through villages to educate people on menstruation and reproductive health
- Celebrated national festivals and Balika Mahotsav in Oct (Girls festival)
 - Street plays, songs, dances and rallies – to raise awareness about girls rights and issues
- On National Girl Child Day, a girls' kabaddi tournament was organised for the first time, with participation from all centers. The event significantly boosted participants' confidence and enthusiasm.



Kishori Kendra Updates (2)

- 8 girls who had dropped out were given books and fees support to restart their education
- An educational excursion was organised for trainees to Sitamarhi, Mirzapur
- Achievements:
 - Muslim women are increasingly participating in programs
 - Girls participating in residential training
 - Girls openly talk about menstruation and reproductive health
 - 2 girls teaching tailoring and embroidery in their communities



Kishori Kendra Summer Camp (1)

- Summer Camp held from 15 May – 15 June 2025
- One month training
 - Beautician, computer literacy, English speaking, dance and self-defense
- Special training
 - Scooter riding
 - Art and Craft
 - Career counselling
 - Police station visit
 - Music and singing



Kishori Kendra Summer Camp (2)

- Special training
 - Scooter riding
 - Arts and Craft
 - Career counselling
 - Police station visit
 - Music and singing
 - Handicrafts
 - Health Emergency Training



SHG

Women Self Help Groups (SHG)

- Women traditionally do not have much rights – whether it is the household or the community. The objective of SHG is to organize the women into groups so that they can deal with issues common to them
- There are about ~300 women self-help groups running with a strength of more than 7500 women from 80 villages
- Every month the money from groups is being deposited and women are trading among themselves as per their need. The saving of all the groups collectively is close to 71 lakh rupees
- Training of group operations was given to the leaders of these groups
- In order to empower women in these groups, training programs were organized on issues such as violence against women, women's rights, their participation in Panchayat, and participated in various events organized by them



SHG Updates (1)

- SHG in 80 villages with 7500 women
- Festivals and Women's Day celebrations were held
- Small business
 - Pickle making, washing powder, jam, papad, etc
- Women get freedom from moneylenders and become more independent
- Reduction in child marriage and dowry practices

Total Savings	₹6,14,5800
Total Interest Earned	₹1,04,3790
Total Penalties Collected	₹7,210
Miscellaneous Income	₹13,320
Total Loans Disbursed	₹63,92,300
Balance in Fund	₹8,22,820



SHG Updates (2)

- Women's Day Celebrations were held and 3000 women participated
- Residential training was organized for SHG members



Feeding India Program

Feeding India Program

- It is a CSR initiative by Zomato
- They are sponsoring mid-day-meal (MDM) scheme at the ASV school
 - Provide Rs 10/kid/day for breakfast and Rs 15/kid/day for lunch
 - Food is cooked fresh by women of the SHG
- Program has done very well and have been supporting 36 Anganwadi centers in 5 villages, serving 2160 children
 - To include delivery cost, sponsorship amount is Rs 15/kid/meal/day
 - Women are happy to work for this program - work 2-3 hours; work is local; children are part of the Anganwadi/school; food for themselves;
- Recently in August 2025 they expanded the program to 41 more Anganwadi centers
 - 77 centers and 11 villages in total
 - SHG women are being trained to cook and deliver the food being prepared
 - Kitchen and staff need to be scaled



Feeding India Program (2)

- E-rickshaws training was provided to women from the SHG to deliver the food to the anganwadis
 - 4 e-rickshaws are driven by women to deliver the food
 - Women found it challenging to take on this role for social concerns
- SHG created an organization Janta Rasoi to work on this initiative – GST registered, FSSI registered
 - Funding for these efforts go to this organization



Library

Background

- The Asha Gyan Pustakalaya was established in 2015. At that time, educational conditions in rural areas were challenging — while parents managed to enroll children in school, the high cost of textbooks meant that many students had to drop out midway
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the library became a lifeline. As schools and colleges shut down, families with means arranged online classes for their children, but rural students had no such access. Adhering to COVID-safety protocols, the library distributed books to students, enabling them to continue their studies through the crisis
- Students use it as a resource to complete their education and pursue their aspirations



Asha Library Updates (1)

- Membership of 2000 students
- Students are from poor families who cannot afford books
- Library is doing very well and it has been very popular among the local kids
- Students receive help to apply for scholarships when pursuing graduate studies.
- Plan is to add a digital library and study hall where students can gather and study
 - Library project is supported by Asha Boston



Asha Library Success Stories

Azim Premji University



Varsha, Anish, and Anjali are pursuing undergraduate degrees at Azim Premji University (APU) in Bangalore and Bhopal on scholarships valued at ₹21 lakhs each.

Sankara Hospital Chennai



Khushi, Ranju, and Mahima are undertaking a nursing course (ophthalmology) at Shankara Eye Hospital, Coimbatore on scholarships of ₹12 lakhs each.

Girl Icon Project



17 girl students received scholarships of ₹20,000 each under the Girl Icon Project to support their studies.

Asha Library Success Stories

Banaras Hindu University



Akash is pursuing a B.Sc. at Banaras Hindu University and Sanam at Allahabad University.

Help for the library



Gulshan, Vijay, Deepak, Pawan, and others are now serving in government positions and continue to contribute books to the library.

Garment Company in Delhi



Khushboo, having completed a fashion design course, is employed in Noida — a remarkable journey for a village girl.

Budget

Budget Summary 2026-27

	Budget Summary		Original Budget 2026-27	Proposed Support for 2026-27	Proposed Split for 2026 - 27	2025-26 Austin Approved amounts	Comments
1	ASV School		1,293,600	1,293,600	GF	1,214,400	Covered by GF last year
2	Kishori Kendra		960,000	960,000	Austin	894,000	Covered by Austin last year
3	Audit Fee		67,000	67,000	Austin	63,000	
4	Construction/Miscellaneous Budget		998,000	606,400	GF	486,000	
				392,000		17,000	
	Total		3,318,600	3,319,000			

			Year 2026-27	Year 2025-26	
	Austin Budget Proposal	Austin	1,419,000	974,000	
	GF Budget Proposal	GF	1,900,000	1,700,400	
		Total	3,319,000	2,674,400	

- Asha Rajatalab should receive 20K USD from Asha General Funds (~19 lakhs). Call held on Aug 30th 2026
- Asha Austin has allocated about 11.2K USD
- SHG initiative is currently supported by AID
- Nandlal's salary is supported by Asha Bangalore
- Asha library initiative is supported by Asha Boston
- Construction budget of 3,92,000 will be outstanding. If chapter can support that would be very helpful

	USD	INR	
Austin Allocation	11,200	1,064,000	Assumes 1USD = 95 INR
GF Allocation	20,000	1,900,000	
Total available		2,964,000	

Questions

Archive links to videos and articles

- <https://bookofachievers.com/articles/weaver-is-changing-the-face-of-varanasi-by-eradicating-evil-practices-but-how>
- <https://youtu.be/X0eQwobdTVI> (Awareness about elections)
- https://youtu.be/U_RFYbmItwg (Mobile Health Camp)
- https://youtu.be/8HzjUn_F_aY (Washing Powder Initiative)
- Article on Terrace Garden maintained by Nandlalji – [Link](#)
- Nandlal Interview - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dVc9kHnTKoY>