

Annual Report – Nandlal Master Fellowship

July 2014 to June 2015

ASHA Rajatalab and NJSS Work

All the work done under ASHA Rajatalab and NJSS Project were carried out according to the work plan made in the beginning of the project year, as was done in the previous year. Meetings with teachers and staff were conducted on monthly basis and all centers were taken into consideration such as Social School, Adolescent Girls' Center, SHG and work plan was made accordingly. Evaluation on monthly basis was done and reports were sent to ASHA Chicago. Accounting and auditing of all income and expenses were done.

ASHA Social School: Under ASHA Rajatalab and NJSS project, two full time centers are at work – one in Nagepur and the other in Harsos village. Apart from these there are other Non formal education centers in different villages. The new academic session has started in July with 600 children altogether. Children were provided with books and stationery and the teachers were given teaching aids. Along with this the children were provided with government syllabus books free of cost which were made available by the primary education department. The students in class 5 appeared in the government examination system. The primary education officials have been approached in order to get government recognition for the Nagepur Social School. Necessary papers have been moved in this regard. Student and guardian meetings have been held. The teachers were given trainings to enhance their ability and skills.

Adolescent Girls' Center and Summer Training Program: At present there are 120 girls who are 14 and more years of age and are learning stitching, embroidery and doing regular studies at 4 centers. Monthly meetings with the instructors and teachers of these centers along with the girls have been conducted. Sewing machines and other necessary things have been provided to these centers. The girls took part in two leadership development trainings.

A summer training camp from 20 May to 15 June 2015 was held for these adolescent girls in which 75 girls were present. The training involved Computer learning, handicrafts making, beautician course, jewellery and toys making, dance, martial arts and painting. I have performed the key role in organizing this training. Two teachers were taken from the city to help in the training. I was involved in planning and making various things available. In the camp the children of Chance India were trained in the art of performing street plays.

The work of Chance India: The 30 students selected under Chance India program were admitted in different schools and were provided with books, stationery and other things of need. The accounts work related to this program was done, supporters were contacted and were informed about the progress.

Training Program for Chance India and other adolescent children: All the children supported by Chance India are studying in different schools. The need was felt that these children should be made aware of the present social issues through dialogue with them. For this reason, on every Sunday and other school holiday I conduct classes for them in ASHA Social School. Along with information on present social issues, we discuss their personal problems if any and how we can collectively overcome them. I am working with these children and helping them in making plans for the future.

Self Help Groups: At present there are 32 SHGs and more than 600 women are members. These groups meet on monthly basis and contribute a fixed amount. The money thus collected is given to a woman of the group who is in need of it. The total amount in all these SHGs is approx. INR 7,00,000. The office bearers of these SHGs undergo training and they periodically meet the staff to make future plans. The women of these SHGs

are given trainings on issues pertaining to their needs such as violence against women, rights of women, women's role in panchayats. I have participated in various programs organized by these SHG women. The formation of a Federation of these SHGs in the future is in the planning process.

MNREGA and MNREGA Labor Union: The office bearers of MNREGA labor union of Arazilines, Varanasi have organized meetings in the past year to discuss issues under MNREGA and were given training for the proper functioning of the union. By our intervention the MNREGA laborers were allotted work under MNREGA scheme, their wages were paid on time, necessary facilities at the work site were made available for them. Meetings with MNREGA laborers and our staff were held on need basis, they were involved in panchayat work. Government officials were contacted for the welfare of these laborers. Protest rallies were organized to draw attention of the government and the officials towards the needs of the laborers. In the past year I was invited by other organizations to impart training on MNREGA issues to their staff and the labor union formed by their work.

Collective marriage program without dowry: This year on 10th May 151 pairs of brides and grooms took marriage vows in one program. No dowry was given or received. The preparations took more than a month. A fund of INR 35,00,000 was collected locally in cash and kind, the local people contributed for the program. Around 10,000 people gathered for this program and all took part in the marriage buffet. Each newly wed pair received a bicycle, sewing machine, T.V., electric fan, bed quilt, mattress, kitchen utensils, clothes and other necessary household items.

Movement against Coca Cola: A movement against Coca Cola factory at Mehendiganj, Varanasi is being carried on for the past 12 years for their excessive use of ground water and against pollution by the factory. We have been constantly demanding closure of the plant. The movement saw success on 6th June 2014 when the U.P. State pollution Control Board ordered the plant to be shut. The Coca Cola Company approached the National Green Tribunal in this regard but they did not succeed. As a result the INR 2,35,00,00,000 bottling plant was closed. We have been trying with the help of the local farmers and villagers to see the government issues final orders for the complete closure of this plant.

Right to Education and Right to Information: The common man has a fundamental right to information in which he can be helped in case of any need or if he is facing a problem. Different groups of people were made aware of the right to information act through programs conducted by the U.P. state government. People of the project area were also made aware of the right to education act 2009 and the school management committee at the panchayats were strengthened, its role was discussed with the village residents and school teachers.

Sajhha Sanskriti Manch: This is a collective platform for around 65 Social the government. Organizations in Varanasi. This body has organized several programs in the last year on human rights, violence against women, land acquisition policy of the government. Protest rallies and street plays have been conducted to draw attention of the government and to make common man aware of these issues. I have been instrumental and have played key roles in these programs.

Annual Convention of ASHA India: Annual convention of ASHA India was organized on 28th Feb and 1st March 2015 at ASHA Social School, Rajatalab, Varanasi. This was organized and conducted by me.

Participation in NAPM programs: I have the responsibility of the coordination of NAPM U.P. I took part in NAPM National Convention in Pune and in other state and National meetings and programs.

Europe Educational Tour: On invitation by European friends, I was on tour to Europe for three weeks. I visited friends in Holland, Germany and Hungary and stayed with them. I had opportunity to observe the

primary education system, culture and art there. I had meetings with people of Chance India. I imparted information to many on Chance India. The support to many children that was discontinued in the past has restarted now, the children have once again started to get support.

Other programs organized by Lok Samiti:

Womens' Kajali Convention: As an endeavor to uplift folk art and culture, with the support of Union Bank, Womens Kajali Convention was organized in which 1000 women from 30 villages took part. The participating teams were felicitated with prizes.

Peoples' Court for settlement of disputes: Many small level disputes occur in villages such as in the family, marriage or related to land. In such cases when police and the court are involved, it takes time and money. It is seen as loss to both the parties. Through our intervention in such matters, we have seen positive results in solving cases through meetings with both the parties. We come across cases on weekly basis and help them as much as is possible.

Street plays for pre election campaign: The U.P. panchayat elections are to be held in September 2015. To make people aware on panchayat elections, street plays were organized from 18th to 22nd Feb 2015. People were made aware of government schemes and policies and handbills were distributed.

03 days training program of Chance India children: A three days' training program for the Chance India children was conducted from 11th to 13th April 2015. The children were taught about communal harmony and how to respect the people of different religion and caste.

Training Camp on health: With the support of Kalpana Hospital Varanasi a health training camp was organized at ASHA Ashram, Nagepur in the month of November. 300 children, women and sick people were checked in this camp and medicines were provided free of cost.

Some important programs in the coming year:

- Coordination of ASHA Rajatalab, Lok Samiti and NJSS
- Coordination of Chance India
- Federation of SHG women
- Active participation in movement against Coca Cola
- Collective marriage program
- Sajhha Sanskriti Manch and NAPM work
- Participation in other programs of ASHA India
- Program for Right to Food and mass awareness
- PVAC for the forthcoming panchayat elections.

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