

Review of Fellowship - Nandlal Master



Background and Experience

- Hails from a sari weaver family near Varanasi
- In 1994 he gave up his study of B.Sc and started teaching kids in the village
- Inspired the youth to teach in the schools and was able to start 10 such schools (2 day and 8 night) without any outside support
- He got his BA and MA degrees in Sociology in 1997 and 1999 from Purvanchal University, Jaunpur.
- In 1999 at the age of 22, he founded Lok Samiti – a people's organization. Lok Samiti has now spread to 25 villages

Background and Experience ...

- Started the Kala Manch – a cultural team which went to different villages to raise awareness on social issues through the medium of street plays and songs
- In 2001 – he became the State Convener (from U.P.) of the National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM)
- In 2003, he led the community struggle against the Coca-cola plant in Mehdiganj demanding the people's right to water
- Formation of 30-35 self-help groups for women
- Initiated campaigns in 2-3 villages to raise awareness about the right to information, the right to work and the right to food

Lok Samiti

- Lok Samiti – a people's organization with no religious or political affiliations was founded in 1999. The belief was - any sustained change can only be brought about by people participation rather than a single person
- Helps organize people so that they can represent themselves. The organization is democratic in structure with the representatives answerable to the people
- The group focuses on the issues of the people and works to find their own solution by collaborating with other Lok Samiti or other groups in the area
- Lok Samiti has committees in 20 – 25 villages
- Encourages people to stand for elections to the Panchayat. Many of the volunteers have been elected over the years - Mukesh was elected as Pradhan in Nagipur and Urmila was elected as a Panchayat member in Benipur
- Increase awareness on various social issues through the Kala Manch

Education initiative

- Started teaching kids from the neighborhood in 1994 (that is why people started calling him Nandlal Master)
- Most children in the area worked with their families in the local Benarasi sari industry. Nandlal started evening schools for the children so that they could continue working. He believes that the children were learning useful skills which could help them earn their livelihood
- Make the government schools accountable – for educational content and schemes like the mid-day meal
- Started with a few night schools and it grew to about 10 night schools – but now the night schools are closed because most of the children have been mainstreamed

Education initiative

- Currently there are two regular schools run in the day-time – one at Nagepur and other at Harsos. The one at Harsos will probably be shut down because the school does not have a building and will not meet the requirements of the RtE Bill. Lok Samiti is planning on registering the school at Nagepur.
- Started about 6 education centers for adolescent girls (Kishori Kendras). The goal has been to reach out to adolescent girls who have not been to school or those who have dropped out much earlier. Some of the girls are newly married also. They provide them with basic reading and writing skills along with information about their rights, health, and provide some sort of vocational training.

Education – Chance India Foundation

- **Chance India Foundation** – The two volunteers from Hungary, Attila and Dora, who were working with the schools over the last two years have gone back. They supported about 40 kids through a SAC like program.
- Another volunteer Silvi joined them for three months. She was an English language teacher back in Germany. She taught class 3 and class 4 students, teachers of the schools, workers of the group, and children adopted by Chance India (these are children who have finished class 5 at NJSS)
- All expenses of these children are covered – clothes, books, fees etc
- The volunteers are encouraging Lok Samiti to start classes 6 to 8. They believe the children will do better here than in the govt school

Children sitting outside in the sun in winter at the day school in Nagepur.
One can see the building in the background.



Children attending the neighborhood night school. Now most of the children have been mainstreamed, and these centers are no longer operational





Children celebrating Independence day at school at Nagepur

Kishori Kendras – Summer Camp

- Every year in the summer they organize a camp for the girls
- They invite different people to come in and provide the training.
- This summer camp includes girls who regularly come to the Kishori Kendras and also other girls from the community
- There are different workshops on – Art, Music, Dance, Embroidery, Painting, Mehndi designs, cooking, etc

Art Workshop



Dance Workshop



Craft Workshop



Craft Workshop



Papad Making Workshop



Products made by the girls



Students along with the teachers



Cultural Program at the finish



Each participant getting a certificate

