

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2008-2009



# NAVSARJAN

**“New Creation”**

**1<sup>st</sup> APRIL 2008 TO 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2009**



**Navsarjan is a grassroots Dalit organization dedicated to ensuring justice for all**

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## **Preface:**

**Dear Friends,**

Every year for Navsarjan has remained challenging, interesting, reflective and hopeful. During the year 2008-2009, the organization grew in its approaches and strategies, which further strengthened the decentralization process and created more systems to increase the participation of communities at the grassroots level.

One significant achievement for the organization and the Dalit movement was the landmark judgment in the Patan gang rape incident. The team members of Navsarjan journeyed through all kinds of social and political challenges, making the struggle to ensure justice for the rape survivor difficult. It was made clear through constant questioning of the identity of the rape survivor how important it is to deliver security and justice for the victims of such atrocious crimes.

Since the year 2007, Navsarjan has launched Gujarat Women's Rights Councils to strengthen the voices, leadership and spaces for women across caste, region and religious identity. During the reporting period these councils have moved one step further by setting up village councils.

Navsarjan has also started planning for the Gulliver museum of the human body, which will be 110 feet long and 30 feet high. This museum will be a unique way for children to expand their scientific understanding by exploring through seeing and touching the various parts and organs of the human body.

The “Chhote Bhim” or young Ambedkar drama competition was a significant and wonderful program of this year which brought together the children from 16 villages and the students from the three boarding schools of Navsarjan. The children were given three books written by Martin Macwan with which they had to prepare a play of 30 minutes, exploring the young life of the inspirational Dalit leader, Dr. Ambedkar. The winner was given an impressive trophy, which provided just enough competitive excitement to encourage the students to create really innovative, meaningful and engaging dramas. Navsarjan's dream is to make the competition so interesting that the children, forgetting their caste and religious identities, will join together to create unity and equity in society.

On the organizational level, Navsarjan has begun strengthening the second line of leadership. A team of 8 members of the organization are being trained and their competencies and skills are being enhanced in order to strengthen the work of the organization and ensure its future and thereby strengthen the Dalit movement.

**Jai Bhim**

**Manjula Pradeep**  
Executive Director  
Navsarjan

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## OUR MISSION

- **To eliminate discrimination based on untouchability practices.**
- **To ensure equality of status and opportunities for all, regardless of caste, class, or gender.**
- **To ensure the rule of law.**

## CONTEXT

3000 years of caste oppression have left the Dalit community socially, economically and psychologically marginalized. Dalits are constantly subjected to egregious violence, dehumanizing labor (such as manual scavenging), and a pervasive system of social exclusion. Though protections exist in Indian law, they are seldom enforced as caste hierarchy is mirrored in the bureaucratic, police and court systems.

Acts of atrocity against Dalits, particularly when they begin to assert their rights, are commonplace. Practices of untouchability are rampant, both between non-Dalits and Dalits, and amongst Dalit sub-castes. The poor rarely unite due to caste and community divisions, making the achievement of laborer unity, and therefore the implementation of minimum wages, extremely challenging. Land redistribution laws have been passed, but the government and the dominant caste landlords fight unceasingly to prevent Dalits from actually gaining control over land that is legally theirs. Caste practices are even replicated within the education system, preventing Dalit children from full participation in their classrooms, thereby barring them from accessing the most important tool for social mobility. Moreover, violence against women is on the rise and patriarchal attitudes toward the role of women prevail.

## NAVSARJAN PROGRAMS

Despite their varying nature, all of Navsarjan's programs have a common focus: Strengthening the non-cooperation movement with caste and gender discrimination, and assuring rule of the constitution and not of caste. It is Navsarjan's objective to empower the Dalit communities of Gujarat and lead them towards the path of non-cooperation and liberation.

The problems facing Dalits and women in Indian society are many, and a holistic strategy is therefore necessary to fight them. Though Navsarjan's programs may seem to vary, they reflect our philosophy that these issues are all connected. There are substantial linkages between each program, as the different campaign teams cooperate to increase effectiveness. The programs implemented over the past year are:

- 1. Human Rights Value Education**
- 2. Manual Scavenging Eradication**
- 3. Land Rights**
- 4. Minimum Wage Implementation**
- 5. Women's Rights**
- 6. Local Governance and Political Rights**
- 7. Youth Awareness and Motivation**
- 8. Digitization of Research and Documentation**
- 9. Dalit Shakti Kendra (DSK) vocational training center**
- 10. Community Video Unit (CVU)**
- 11. Center for Dalit Human Rights (CDHR)**

A brief **description** of each program and the activities involved during the past year are described below.

## 1. Human Rights Value Education:

Navsarjan believes that education is a human right. As an agent of social mobility, education can lead to the emancipation of the Dalit masses. Today, however, the education system perpetuates caste discrimination, reproducing discriminatory practices and effectively denying many Dalit children their basic right to education. As a result, the chance to break out of the cycle of caste-based occupations and menial labor is lost.

At school, Dalit children are frequently forbidden from sitting with non-Dalit students during the mid-day meal, and from participating in school cultural programs. Many are forced to clean the school's toilets while non-Dalit children are free to play. The government teachers themselves enforce this discrimination, often refusing to pass Dalit students and giving them less attention in class. As a result, the dropout rate of Dalit children (especially girls) from primary school is alarmingly high.

Navsarjan's Human Rights Value Education campaign strives to stop discrimination in village schools; achieve a zero dropout rate of Dalit children from primary schools; encourage personal growth; allow children to develop scientific skills and rational beliefs; empower through values of equality, both in terms of gender and otherwise; ensure that the most disadvantaged Dalit communities, such as the scavengers, receive priority-based opportunities; focus on female students, and give them priority-based opportunities; and create a duplicable model of social empowerment.

### A. Navsarjan Vidhyalaya Primary Boarding Schools

Navsarjan operates 3 primary boarding schools in rural areas of Gujarat known to have a high level of discrimination against Dalits: one near Katariya village, Limbdi taluka, Surendranagar district; the second near Rayka village, Dhandhuka taluka, Ahmedabad district; and the third near Sami village, Sami taluka, Patan district. In addition to emphasizing Dalit unity and total gender equality, the schools provide a quality education to children who would otherwise either be enrolled in poor-quality government schools, or have dropped out; many of the students come from schools in which they experienced discrimination for being Dalits. As these children grow, they will become the next generation of Dalit leaders, empowered to lead the Dalit movement forward.

- During the reporting period, a total of 258 students (including 72 girls) in 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> classes from all three schools completed the school year.

- Navsarjan Vidhyalaya Katariya is set to begin 8<sup>th</sup> standard next year.



Girl students in Standard 6 at Navsarjan Vidhyalay Rayka

- A number of educational events were organized and successfully completed.

## B. Primary Education Footmarch (“Padyatra”)and Education Kit Distribution

Footmarches help to rally children and their parents in support of primary education. Education kits are distributed, including books written by Martin Macwan to challenge caste and gender discrimination. Fieldworkers engage the community in discussions about the importance of education, and children march around the village with a banner announcing the importance of primary education. They chant slogans relating to child rights, right to food, right to play, right to love, and the right of girls to get education.

- In 29 talukas in 5 districts, footmarches were held in 114 villages. 4,817 children took part in the footmarches.

## C. Bhimshala and library program

Bhimshalas (“Bhim” from Bhimrao Ambedkar, and “shala” from the Gujarati word for school) are extra-curricular education centers, run by a Navsarjan-trained volunteer from the local community usually out of her or his home. In addition to receiving training in combating discrimination at village schools, Bhimshala volunteers organize activities for the village children, including educational games, cultural activities, and exposure visits to public places. Most Bhimshalas function with attached Navsarjan libraries, which consist of about 100 carefully selected books at a variety of reading levels, and a bookshelf produced at Dalit Shakti Kendra. Navsarjan trains volunteers to operate the libraries out of their homes.



**Bhimshala children accepting books from the education kits brought by the primary education footmarch**

- 137 new Bhimshalas were established with libraries.
- 39 training programs were held for 264 female and 490 male volunteers.

## D. Children's Groups (“Bal Sangathan”)

Bal Sangathans are children's groups designed to combat discrimination and increase children's confidence. Each group engages 10 to 15 children, depending on the number of Dalit children in the village. The groups are organized either by a Navsarjan fieldworker, a Bhimshala or library volunteer, or by the children themselves. Generally, the groups meet on a monthly basis. Within the groups, children inform a Navsarjan fieldworker about discrimination in school, and the fieldworker teaches the children how to challenge that discrimination. The children also play games and run cultural activities. A few Bal Sangathans have established small savings groups and opened a bank account.

- 65 new Bal Sangathans were established.
- 96 meetings were held with these groups, involving 1,064 girls and 1,181 boys.

## E. Children's Camps

Children's Camps are gatherings of about 40 to 50 children, organized by Navsarjan fieldworkers. The fieldworkers run a variety of activities, including a public speaking competition, cultural programs, educational activities, sports, an introduction to Dr. Ambedkar's philosophy, and gender rights education. Educational Kits are distributed, including books written by Navsarjan founder Martin Macwan to challenge gender and caste discrimination. These camps bring children together across sub-caste and caste lines, sometimes from several villages at a time.

- 206 Children's Camps were held across Gujarat, involving 3,453 girls and 4,294 boys.

## F. Educational Community Video Unit (ECVU, *Bhim Video Shala*)

The ECVU produces short 30-minute films for children, and then screens them at government primary schools, Bhimshalas, and the Navsarjan Vidhyalay primary schools. The ECVU uses the medium of video to teach children about a variety of topics not covered in their textbooks with the goal of increasing their understanding of science and their feelings of social responsibility.

- The following 4 films were produced during the year:
  - ***Environment and the Balance of Nature:*** This film teaches children about how nature works to maintain balance. For example, information is provided on how trees absorb Carbon Dioxide and emit Oxygen.
  - ***Local Self-Government:*** This film explains how the village Panchayat system works, and what the Sarpanch's responsibilities are as the head of the Panchayat.
  - ***Lives of Gujaratis:*** This film teaches about the lives of people from across Gujarat and how those lives differ, touching on issues of migration.
  - ***Light:*** This film teaches the science of light, how it travels and how it enables us to see what is in front of us.
- 87 screenings were held in 42 villages, with a total audience of 2,940 boys and 2,194 girls.

### Impact

- Through teamwork of the Bhimshala volunteers and students, and the Navsarjan field staff, overt discrimination such as separate seating for Dalits during mid-day meal was removed from 36 schools during the reporting period.
- The issue of discrimination against Dalit children in government school has been highlighted in national newspapers.
- Sub-caste discrimination within the Dalit community is being reduced thanks to the children's meetings and Bhimshalas. Many children are speaking out against untouchability and gender discrimination.
- In many villages, non-Dalit children also attend Bhimshalas.
- Many parents have been convinced to keep their daughters in school, instead of forcing them to drop out in order to do chores, and then marrying them off at an early age.

### Challenges

- Certain sub-castes within the Dalit community resist educating girls.
- At the Sami and Rayka Navsarjan Vidhyalay primary schools, monsoon season presents outdoor flooding challenges.
- About half of the students who come to the primary schools in 5<sup>th</sup> standard cannot properly read or write, presenting a challenge to the teachers on how to teach students from such different educational levels in one class.

### General Education Challenges

- Due to child labor practices common in migratory families, many children in these families lose continuity in education, and cannot attend Bhimshala activities.
- There is discrimination in government aid, and scholarship money meant for Dalits students is often stolen by principals and teachers.
- Some Bhimshala volunteers are unwilling or unable to hold regular classes because of financial difficulties or circumstantial situations, such as marriage or shifting villages.
- Sub-caste discrimination remains a persistent problem.

## 2. Manual Scavenging Eradication:

Gujarat's own Mahatma Gandhi called for the end of manual scavenging more than 100 years ago, and yet caste-dictated, government-funded manual handling and transport of human excreta persists. The Valmiki (manual scavenger and sweeper caste), most often women, who perform this work suffer from a variety of serious diseases and disorders at a much higher rate than the general population. They are treated by both society and government as social outcasts fit only for this degrading and dangerous work. In villages and towns, many use only a short broom, a piece of cardboard, and a metal dish or reed basket as tools. The dish or basket is filled with excrement, placed on the head or in a pushcart, and carried to a secluded area for disposal.

The situation is no better in the cities, where the lack of a mechanized sewer system leads to frequent clogs and jams. Men from the Valmiki community are lowered into sewer gutters through manholes, their only protection being the rope tied to their waist. In Gujarat alone, dozens of men die every year from inhaling the toxic gases. Because the government evades responsibility by outsourcing the work to private companies who pick up the workers as daily laborers, obtaining proper government compensation for the families of the deceased is extremely challenging. Despite the fact that the government is flagrantly violating its own laws by employing individuals for the purposes of manual scavenging, it claims that because the workers are technically employed by private companies, the government is not liable.

Navsarjan has been working for the eradication of manual scavenging since 1995. Progress has been made, but manual scavenging is still present in Gujarat: estimates put the number of practicing manual scavengers at around 64,000 in Gujarat alone.

### A. Village Meetings and Training Programs

Village meetings in the Valmiki (Scavenger) communities are held consistently across Gujarat, and training and awareness programs are done to provide legal and rehabilitation information, to gather information about how many people are engaging in manual scavenging, and to encourage young people to come to Dalit Shakti Kendra for vocational training. Also, motivation and assistance is given to help manual scavengers take advantage of existing government programs to change occupations. Additionally, information about the Ecosan system, developed in partnership with MIT, is provided.



**A woman from the Valmiki community a dry latrine barefoot**

- 575 meetings and training programs were held, and attended by 15,477 people, nearly half of them women.
- 60 volunteers (49 men and 11 women) from the Valmiki community were trained as village volunteers.

### B. Manual Scavenging Awareness Activities

The Manual Scavenging Eradication Campaign team is constantly engaged in a fight to prevent manual scavenging from slipping out of the public consciousness, and to increase awareness about the issues and extent of the problem.

- A *Rakhi* (bracelet tied to a man's wrist by his sister) Campaign was organized in which 5,000 *Rakhis* were sent to the different government and non-government officials on the district, state, national levels. All of the *Rakhis* carried this message on behalf of all women manual scavengers: “Brother, please liberate me from this inhumane work.”

- Issues of manual scavenging and sewer work have been highlighted repeatedly in major newspapers. For example, the prominent English-language newspaper *The Indian Express* interviewed Dalit (Valmiki) students forced to clean the toilets at the villages of Changodar, Navapura and Lodariyal and published their stories.

### C. Legal and Financial Assistance for Manual Scavengers

In the case of the death of a manhole worker due to inhalation of toxic gas in the manhole, Navsarjan works to help obtain compensation for the family and to lodge a case under the Atrocity Act. Additionally, Navsarjan works to help manual scavengers obtain loans designated by the government for rehabilitation into a dignified occupation, and to fight cases relating to wages.

- Legal assistance was provided to 16 male and 8 female manual scavengers on issues related to their wages and provident fund, which were being embezzled by government bureaucrats and private contractors.
- Legal cases were lodged after the deaths of 3 manhole workers. Significantly, for the first time in the history of Gujarat, the case was registered under section 3(1) 6 [forced labor] of the Atrocity Act.

### D. Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers

The government has set aside a large amount of money for the rehabilitation of manual scavengers into a dignified occupation. However, actually obtaining that money is extremely difficult, because of the bureaucratic processes involved, and the lack of will on the part of government officials to certify that the individual does, in fact, do manual scavenging. In these situations, Navsarjan works to help connect manual scavengers to loans, so that they can leave behind manual scavenging and find a new source of livelihood.

- 254 manual scavengers (including 178 men and 76 women) were rehabilitated through government loans.
- 61 youth from manual scavenging families, including 19 girls and 42 boys, came to DSK and completed vocational training.

### General Education Challenges

- Due to child labor practices common in migratory families, many children in these families lose continuity in education, and cannot attend Bhimshala activities.
- There is discrimination in government aid, and scholarship money meant for Dalits students is often stolen by principals and teachers.
- Some Bhimshala volunteers are unwilling or unable to hold regular classes because of financial difficulties or circumstantial situations, such as marriage or shifting villages.
- Sub-caste discrimination remains a persistent problem.

### Impact

- Many young people from the Valmiki community are choosing vocational training instead of manual scavenging, including 61 sent to Dalit Shakti Kendra for vocational training.
- Issues of manual scavenging and sewage work have remained in the media regularly.
- Many government officials and manual scavengers came to know what legal provisions exist, and as a result the rehabilitations of those who have filed affidavits have processed much more quickly.
- Those government departments that received notices from various commissions and other agencies have been successfully pressured, and are now sensitized towards the issue.
- The campaign was able to abolish dry latrines (which require manual scavenging for cleanup) at a number of places.

## Challenges

### Political Challenges

- Forcing the government to take action is extremely difficult, as it continuously evades responsibility. Government officers at all levels repeatedly claim that there is no manual scavenging in Gujarat, because accepting its existence would mean they have a responsibility to end it.
- Loans meant for the rehabilitation of manual scavengers into dignified occupations are given by government officers to people from the Valmiki community who have political connections, but are not involved in manual scavenging. That way, government officers can claim that they are helping Valmikis, when in reality they are doing nothing to help those engaged in manual scavenging.
- Valmikis who are actually engaged in manual scavenging need a certificate certifying as such from the government, but government officials refuse to grant such certificates, making it more difficult for manual scavengers to get the loans they need to change occupations.

### Social Challenges

- It is often difficult to convince manual scavengers to leave their work, which many consider stable because they are government employees and receive a regular paycheck. Many are afraid to lodge complaints because they do not want to lose their jobs.
- Many non-Valmiki Dalits do not want to accept the manual scavenging problem as their own, as seen as it is a “Valmiki issue” rather than a “Dalit issue”.
- Some manual scavengers who do get loans do not spend the money on finding a new occupation or starting a business, but spend it however they like.
- Valmikis who open up a tea stall or some other small shop often face untouchability both from other

## 3. Land Rights:

Lack of farmland is a central reason for Dalit impoverishment, unequal power distribution at the village level, and continued practices of untouchability against Dalits. Without land of their own, many Dalits are forced to work as daily laborers in the fields of dominant caste landlords. This economic dependence creates disabilities in other spheres of life, as Dalits dependent on dominant caste landlords for their livelihood are less likely to lodge cases with the police when members of the dominant caste community discriminate against them or violate their rights in other ways.

The Land Rights Campaign therefore forms part of the backbone of Navsarjan's work. Though many Dalits are entitled to land under a variety of government programs, actually gaining control of the land is a difficult endeavor. Obstacles standing in the way the rightful possession of land by Dalits include land encroachment by dominant caste neighbours, intimidation, political interference, lack of money to legally challenge the authorities, and insufficient knowledge of applicable government programs.

Since its establishment, Navsarjan has been taking legal action to combat unlawful land encroachment, and to make sure land is given to those who are entitled to it. This emphasis is still present, but Navsarjan has also been empowering the community itself to take more responsibility through the creation of the Land Rights Army, a grassroots community group dedicated to working for land rights.

## A. Jamin Adhikar Sena (“Land Rights Army”)

The “Land Rights Army” is a community organization of landless or nearly landless laborers (Dalit, Tribal, and OBC) with the purpose of gaining land through applicable government programs. Member families pay a fee of Rs. 100 each, helping offset the costs of the campaign. The members themselves are trained to take leadership roles, and the organization conducts rallies, mass gatherings, and marches to keep the land issue in the public eye.



Land rights rally in surendranagar city

- 264 day and night meetings were held for members and non-members.
- In 31 villages, 1,509 men, women and children attended legal awareness and training camps.
- In 58 villages, more than 7,000 men, women and children participated in mass gatherings and *gram sabha* village government events to gather momentum for the land rights movement.
- In 70 villages, 86 male and 85 female leaders of the Land Rights Army were trained.
- 112 new member families joined and paid their fees.

## B. Land Surveying

Accurate land surveys are crucial in determining exactly how much land the landless are entitled to, and to accurately represent that fact to the government in order to make sure the land is awarded and actual possession over it is gained. In addition, land surveys can be done to help arrange financial help from the government or other NGOs for poor farmers with small plots of land.

- 2,843 acres of land was surveyed for a petition in the high court.
- 1,613 acres of land owned by small farmers was surveyed for financial assistance.

## C. Land Application and Legal Assistance

Land applications for landless poor are difficult to complete and riddled with bureaucracy. The Navsarjan team provides general guidance with these applications, as well as direct assistance in filling out the forms. In addition, the Land Rights team encourages individuals to file legal if land is being encroached upon or possession denied, and provides legal assistance.

- In over 100 villages, 1,215 men and women were given guidance and information on land rights applications.
- In over 50 villages, 1,148 men and women (including over 150 individuals from the Valmiki community) received help in filling out land applications.
- In over 50 villages, 162 individuals registered legal cases concerning land rights.

## Impact

### Land Issues

- 92 formerly landless families received possession of 243 acres of land.
- Many people at the grassroots level have come to understand the importance of the land rights campaign as a movement to change power structures in society.
- Sustained awareness and training programmes, as well as training of Land Rights Army leaders, has led to individuals fighting for their own case without Navsarjan's assistance.
- Migration has been decreased through granting of land to the landless.

- Due to collective farming after gaining land possession, people's interest and willingness to avail their rights has improved.

### **Social Issues**

- Increased women's stake, including granting of land in women's names, has aided the overall movement.
- Untouchability and other forms of discrimination have decreased due to cooperation between Dalits and other poor.
- Poor are coming together across caste lines on this issue.

### **Challenges**

#### **Caste issues**

- Members of dominant castes are largely resistant to the acquisition of land by Dalits, threatening them with violence, land encroachment, and crop damage.
- There is caste and sub-caste discrimination in farm cooperatives.

#### **Government issues**

- Government officials are largely uninterested in land issues and are slow to respond.
- The Government is quick to provide land to private companies, instead of granting it to landless poor as per the law.
- The state government's policy on Dalits does not emphasize land reform.
- Landholders are often politically connected to government officials, preventing land transfer.

#### **Farming issues**

- A large amount of land is being sold by small landholders tempted by high land prices.
- There is a lack of irrigation infrastructure, forcing many small landholders to migrate for a portion of the year.
- The youth are less interested in farming compared to their parents.

## **4. Minimum Wage Implementation:**

Though Gujarat's daily minimum wage for agricultural laborers was recently raised to Rs. 100 (about \$2.15 USD) from Rs. 80, daily laborers often receive less than half of the wages to which they are legally entitled. When they try to stand up for their wage rights, the landlords often simply stop hiring them, and employ another landless laborer desperate for whatever money he or she can make. Many organizations have tried to organize rural laborers, but one big hurdle always stands in the way: caste. In Gujarat, agricultural daily laborers are generally composed of Dalits, Tribals, and OBC's (Other Backward Castes). Typically, OBC's do not feel much loyalty to Dalits, as they consider themselves higher up on the caste ladder.

More than a decade of work has been done on the ground in Baroda, Anand, and Mehsana Districts, including thousands of day and night meetings to educate people as to their rights. Navsarjan and its Minimum Wage Implementation team have worked hard to gain the laborers' confidence and trust, and the inter-caste makeup of the Union testifies to the fact that caste division has been surmounted.

### **A. Gujarat Kamdar Ekta Sangathan (“Gujarat Laborers Unity Group”)**

Gujarat Kamdar Ekta Sangathan is an agricultural laborers' union that has been organized to assert minimum wage rights. Within the union, there is diverse membership that reflects the makeup of the laborers in the

targeted areas. Union membership cuts across caste and religion: 25% are Dalits, 50% are Tribals, and 25% are OBC. There are also some Muslims. As of April, 2009, Union membership stood at 1,200 men and women. Union members pay Rs. 125 to join. Navsarjan has also organized a life insurance plan for the Union members, and trained union leaders. The goal is for the union to be independent and self-sustainable.

- 248 new members joined the Union.
- 68 day meetings were held, involving 1,719 men, 867 women, and 447 children.
- 71 night meetings were held, involving 1,794 men, 1,120 women, and 481 children.
- 11 training programs were conducted for union leaders (who are also laborers) on legal issues and leadership skills for members of the union. 508 people attended the programs.
- 3 mass gatherings were held with hundreds of participants, including one specifically for issues facing female laborers attended by 400 women.
- Families of union members received Rs. 190,000 in life insurance compensation when the union member died under a life insurance program organized by the union.

## **B. Other activities**

- 1,828 families were surveyed on labor issues and the migration patterns of the laborers.
- Postcard Campaign: On 8<sup>th</sup> August 2008, the campaign team mobilized more than 1,200 individuals working as unorganized laborers to send postcards demanding fair and equitable wages as per the Minimum Wage Act to the Principle Secretary of Labour Department in Gandhinagar.

## **Impact**

### **Minimum Wage Issues**

- Due in large part to the Postcard Campaign and other activities, the government increased the minimum wage from Rs. 80 to Rs. 100 per day.
- Newspapers and other media have supported the campaign, helping it gain momentum.
- Government departments have been sensitized to some degree concerning minimum wages.

### **Social Issues**

- Many women are speaking up about the issues facing them as laborers.
- Dalits and non-Dalits have become united around their common issues in the union.
- Due to the unity of the union members, they have begun to address multiple issues in addition to wages, such as housing, discrimination against children, Below Poverty Line cards, and relevant government schemes, particularly the National Rural Employment Guarantee (NREG) Scheme.

## **Challenges**

### **Regional Issues**

- Illiteracy is high among the target group.
- In Chota-Udepur taluka, 8 to 10 villages still do not have functional primary schools.
- There is a high rate of compromise by applicants after legal cases are lodged, because the size of the labour pool is very large and laborers do not want to lose their only source of income.

### **Political Issues**

- Political willingness is poor and the government's (and law enforcement agency's) collusion with landlords is a big hurdle to the implementation of minimum wages.
- Legal cases and dealings with the government move extremely slowly.

## 5. Women's Rights:

Gender discrimination affects all spheres of a woman's life in Gujarat. Even before birth, illegal gender determination tests are done so that female fetuses can be aborted in favor of males. Once born, girls often become anemic due to nutritional discrimination, as more and higher quality food is given to their brothers and other male family members. These practices have led to a grossly skewed sex ratio in Gujarat (significantly less than 900 girls aged 0 to 6 for every 1,000 boys) that will only exacerbate gender issues in the future. Parents are often hesitant to send their daughters to school past 7<sup>th</sup> standard (if they are sent to school at all), leading to a vastly undereducated female



Women leaders taking pledge to fight against violence on women

population with a literacy rate substantially below the male population. Moreover, sexual assault and domestic violence against girls and women are common, and are extremely underreported due to social stigma attached to them.

Although women's empowerment has always been of major concern to Navsarjan, it became a core program in 2000. Conscious that Dalit women are positioned at the bottom of India's caste and gender hierarchies, Navsarjan strives to give them a voice, and ensures that they are equally and effectively represented in the organization as well as in the movement, at all levels.

The objectives of the Women's Rights campaign are to empower women so that they can seek justice and dignity within their families and communities, and to dilute discriminatory patriarchal culture embodied by all-male caste councils that traditionally dominate village social affairs. Navsarjan ensures that all Navsarjan activists are trained in the specific laws pertaining to women's rights. It offers legal, social and emotional support/security to women applicants; raises awareness of women's rights in the villages through meetings and training programs; establishes Women's Rights Councils to empower women in the villages; and encourages exposure visits to upgrade the knowledge of senior women staff concerning women's issues in other parts of India. Finally, the program also helps to identify key aspects for women's development that need to be addressed in other Navsarjan programs.

### A. Women's Rights Councils

Women's Rights Councils, made up of about 13 women across caste meet monthly to take up local issues, wresting some control from the male-dominated local governments and caste councils. Some of the work that the Women's Rights Councils do includes monitoring local police to check if they are registering FIRs properly, and working on local issues, such as drinking water, infrastructure (roads, etc.), health, social disturbances, marital problems, and domestic violence cases. The councils are made of women across caste lines, with one representative of each caste in the Council.

- 227 Women's Rights Councils (one per village) were established across Navsarjan's work area.
- Women's Rights Councils in 43 villages took up and fought local issues (housing, water, electricity, domestic violence, etc.) and gave memoranda to government officers.
- 2 Taluka-level Women's Rights Councils, containing members of Women's Rights Councils from across the taluka, were activated in Kalol and Vallabhipur.

### B. Women's Awareness and Training Programs

Women's Awareness Training Programs, which are 1 to 2 days long, are run by Navsarjan fieldworkers in Navsarjan's taluka offices. Generally 30 to 40 women participate in one program. If it is the first awareness

program in that area, the fieldworkers provide education on laws pertaining to women (such as the Domestic Violence Act), education about gender discrimination and equality, information on women's health, and leadership training. If it is a follow-up Awareness Training Program, local issues are taken up, including a group discussion on any issues the women are having in their lives, and the fieldworkers provide training on those issues.

- 75 Women's Awareness Training Programs were held, including 2,103 women and 365 men.
- More than 600 smaller awareness meetings were held, involving more than 13,000 women.

### **C. Other activities**

- Mass gatherings were held concerning women's issues across Navsarjan's work area.
- Navsarjan provided legal aid to more than 200 women applications, particularly in cases of domestic violence, rape, and sexual assault.

### **Impact**

#### **Women's Issues**

- The Women's Rights Councils ("*Mahila Adhikar Panch*") are empowering women to approach officials about legal cases that would otherwise go unreported.
- Even illiterate women and women who reside in remote areas are taking part in and sharing their concerns at the Women's Rights Councils.
- Using the strategy of submission of memorandum at the district or state level, it is now possible to mobilize more women on various issues.
- Many women are leaving behind village superstitions and taking a proactive approach to solving their own problems, instead of simply praying for the gods to solve them.
- Women's stake in village Panchayat has immensely increased and they are now actively taking part in the village Panchayat.
- Government officials and departments have been successfully pressured to take action because of the Women's Rights Councils.

#### **Dalit Issues**

- Dalit women are taking leadership roles and changing social constructs; many have become vocal and can speak in public places.
- Fewer Dalit children are dropping out of school due to intervention by the Women's Rights Councils.
- Discrimination against Dalit students in school is now being protested by the women.
- Dalit and non-Dalit women are joining in the same activities, particularly in the Women's Rights Councils and related activities, allowing women of different castes to take on common issues (water, electricity, sanitation, domestic violence etc.) on one platform.

### **Challenges**

#### **Facing Women in Leadership**

- Even though many women are bringing development into their villages through their leadership, many men still refuse to accept their positions because of the prevailing mindset of male dominance.
- Sometimes, Dalit men spread rumors about women who speak out for their rights.
- Many women still hide behind their veils and are not ready to speak out.
- The Women's Rights Councils are sometimes not accepted by village leadership (particularly caste councils), which tries to deny the women leadership roles.

## **Violence Against Women**

- Incidents of rape are increasing, as are domestic violence, abductions, and forms of sexual assault.
- Women have been brutally injured after speaking out in public.
- Many times, the police, government, and judiciary are not interested in rape and murder cases of women or in general women's issues.
- There is a poor response to and treatment of childbirth due to rape.
- Sexual harassment often occurs within families and in communities.
- Many men are against the Domestic Violence Protection Act, and many women do not know about this act.

## **6. Local Governance and Political Rights**

Though the Panchayati Raj Act of 1993 officially reserves seats within the Panchayat village government for Dalits and women, in practice the power often remains in the hands of the dominant castes. Dalit or women “dummy candidates” are often fielded by the dominant castes to prevent candidates from taking office who would actually stand up to unequal power structures and work for the betterment of their communities. There are many cases of a Dalit or woman Sarpanch (chief of Panchayat) never stepping foot in the Panchayat office, and being called only to sign or thumbprint documents the individual cannot even read.

Untouchability practices as well are common within the Panchayat office, as many Dalit Panchayat members and Sarpanches are unaware of relevant laws designed to protect them. The same power hierarchy that exists outside the Panchayat in the rest of the village is replicated, and a Dalit, Sarpanch or not, is told to drink from a separate cup and sit on the floor while the rest of the Panchayat members sit on chairs.

Navsarjan's Local Governance and Political Rights campaign aims to empower Dalit and women Panchayat members and Sarpanches by educating them on relevant laws, their legal rights, and the necessity of standing up to represent their issues within the Panchayat. If the individual's legal rights are being violated within the Panchayat, Navsarjan will provide legal advice. The goal of these activities is to make lasting changes in village power structures according to the purpose of the Panchayati Raj Act.

### **A. Political Education Awareness Programs and Training Programs**

Awareness programs provide political rights education to the Dalit community at the village level. Education is provided on the Indian Constitution, the Panchayati Raj Act (1993), and Social Justice Committees. Training Programs, held for one day in the Dalit locality of the village, are done to teach villagers about the Panchayati Raj (village government) system, and the responsibilities of the Sarpanch and Panchayat members. Generally, 15 to 20 people participate in one program.

- 42 Awareness programmes were held, involving 328 women and 766 men.
- 3 training programmes were held, involving 12 women and 58 men.

### **B. Discrimination Removal Committees**

Each discrimination removal committee visits where discrimination is occurring or a particular violation of political rights occurred. The committee then gives memoranda and organizes a protest program to protect the political rights of the Dalit community. In that way, it can pressure the government and the public to fix the problem.

- 11 discrimination removal Committee meetings were held involving 68 women and 87 men.

## **Impact**

- Sarpanches, Panchayat members, and Social Justice Committee Chairmen are becoming aware of what their rights and responsibilities are, organizing and cooperating together, and working actively to benefit their communities through their positions.
- Especially the youth are becoming more aware of political issues and their political rights.
- Social Justice Committees are becoming active and because of that the Village Government Officer and the Village Committee Members are also becoming more aware.
- After learning about the Panchayat through these programs, women Panchayat members have been empowered to actively take part in Panchayat business, sitting in the meetings on chairs instead of on the floor as they had done previously, etc.
- People are becoming aware of government development schemes and programs, and are fighting to have them implemented.

## **Challenges**

- Non-Dalit Sarpanches and Panchayat members generally do not cooperate, so it is necessary to bypass them and go to a higher government department.
- Many people think that the education provided in the programs is wrong, and it takes them a long time to understand the content.
- People improperly use the Social Justice Committees, and argue with the villagers.
- Because the majority dominates, they do not let Dalits in the front.

## **7. Youth Awareness and Motivation**

Youth in Gujarat are facing a serious crisis. Those who have managed to obtain some education have found few employment opportunities in the organized sector, and are forced to work as daily wage laborers in fields or factories. They are frustrated with the lack of opportunities available to them, and with their social status in relation to the perceived glamour of the city. A powerful cynicism has resulted, leading to addictions to drugs and alcohol, and a stark increase in the suicide rate. Those who suffer most from this situation are the youth from the socially marginalized communities: the scheduled castes (Dalits), the scheduled tribes (Adivasis) and the Other Backward Castes (OBCs) to be specific. Today, the historic legacy of social exclusion based on caste has a strong influence on economic status, as well.

Navsarjan's Youth Awareness activities work to educate youth on village government schemes, land laws, the Panchayat (village council) system, addictions (to combat alcohol and tobacco), and gender issues, all of which help to lessen feelings of powerlessness and cynicism. Once formed, Village Youth Forums meet once or twice a month to discuss local issues, such as village infrastructure, atrocities against Dalits, and how to solve their own issues. If unemployed, students are encouraged to come to DSK for vocational training and social empowerment. The result is that youth feel more engaged and empowered to take control of their lives.

### **A. Youth Awareness Training Programs**

Youth Awareness Training Programs, which are one day long, are run by Navsarjan fieldworkers in Navsarjan's taluka offices. Generally 15 to 30 youth participate in one program. The fieldworkers provide education on village government schemes, land laws, the Panchayat (village council) system, addictions (to combat alcohol and tobacco), and gender issues.

- 89 training programs were held, attended by 657 women and 1,722 men.

### **B. Youth Forums**

Navsarjan sets up village Youth Forums, generally composed of at least 5 village youth, but sometimes 10 to 15, depending on the number of Dalit youth in the village. After receiving training from Navsarjan fieldworkers, these forums meet once or twice a month to discuss local issues, such as village infrastructure, atrocities against Dalits, and how to solve their own issues.

- 137 Youth Forums were established, composed of 341 women and 1,435 men.

## Impact

- In Surendranagar District in some villages in which Ekta Yuva Sangathan i.e. The Unity Youth Organization was established, members celebrated 14<sup>th</sup> April (Ambedkar's birthday) for the first time.
- A celebration was held in the Valmiki area to get rid of sub-caste discrimination.
- Youth used the legal training they received in several villages.
- The youth organization in Memka village took up a local issue of burial ground with their village Panchayat.
- The youth organization in Vastadi village, Vadvan Taluka, eliminated untouchability with barber shops in their village.
- The youth organization members in Chotila Taluka were able to apply the NREG scheme in 14 villages.
- The youth organization in one village held a footmarch against sub-caste discrimination despite the protest of caste elders.
- The youth organization in two villages organized arranged for the government to provide housing plots for the Dalit community.

## Challenges

- Some Hindu organizations have brought weapons to potentially use against the Ekta Yuva Sangathan.
- Some members of the Ekta Yuva Sangathan want the organization to provide it with gifts, like other organizations do.
- Women are much less involved in the youth organizations.
- Many youth have various addictions (alcohol, etc.) and are not interested in joining the organization or cooperating with it.
- The education level of many members is very low, which is a challenge during training sessions.
- Many youth are not ready to leave superstitious beliefs and take action concerning their own problems.
- Elders pressure the youth against changing the status quo.

## 8. Digitization of Research and Documentation:

Both the quantity and quality of accurate and up-to-date data on Dalit issues are lacking. As a result, human rights groups across India often struggle to share information with each other about their work areas, and lobbying efforts become more difficult.

In collaboration with the RFK Center for Human Rights and the University of Maryland, Navsarjan conducted the first of a series of surveys for the Digitization of Research and Documentation program, on untouchability practices around Gujarat. The first draft of analysis is already complete. Once finalized, this survey will provide an unprecedented view of the extent to which untouchability is actively practiced in Gujarat today.



A Navsarjan fieldworker administering the manual scavenging survey

A new survey on manual scavenging practices in Gujarat is currently being undertaken in order to gain a more accurate view of the extent of manual scavenging practices in the state, as well as the issues facing manual scavengers. Ultimately, it is hoped that the results of this survey will help Navsarjan to increase the number of manual scavengers rehabilitated into a dignified occupation, and add pressure on the government to enforce the ban on manual scavenging.

## Impact

- Administering the survey on untouchability practices gave greater understanding to Navsarjan fieldworkers concerning the scope of the issue, particularly between Dalit sub-castes.
- Larger impact will be visible once the analysis is published.

## Challenges

- The large size of the untouchability survey form made filling it out completely very challenging.
- For the manual scavenging survey, some people do not want to provide accurate information because of the sensitivity of the topic.

## 9. Dalit Shakti Kendra (DSK):

Dalit Shakti Kendra literally “Center for Dalit Empowerment” is located in Village Nani Devti, 25 kilometers from Ahmedabad. It is primarily a vocational education center serving economically and socially marginalized youth, though it also provides personality development, leadership skills, social and political education, and a space for self-reflection and growth. A central part of DSK's philosophy is a redefinition of the word “Dalit”, thereby including Dalits from various economic, social and religious backgrounds. Each course at DSK is 45 days long.



A Student participating in a sports event  
In Dalit Shakti Kendra

Most of DSK's students are landless, and have dropped out of school to work in the labor sector. Typically, their parents are farmers. Their dependence on caste-based occupations diminishes their sense of self. DSK mobilizes such youth for economic and social empowerment helping them leave the cycle of agricultural labor and caste-based occupations and simultaneously fosters better grassroots leadership.

- 1,033 students completed their vocational training at DSK, including 610 boys and 423 girls.

## Additional Activities:

- A Spoken English course was added.
- Students receive political, legal, sex, and other educational information through training programs featuring guest lecturers.
- Students participate in public speaking contests, sports games, and other opportunities for personal growth.
- The DSK campus functions as a major center for the Dalit movement, hosting trainees, Indian and international graduate students and professors, and major events.

## Impact

- Students take DSK's message of equality back to their homes and communities.
- More and more students are coming to DSK, because they see the success of their friends who have come to DSK.
- More female students are attending DSK, and a reduction in gender bias can therefore be seen.
- Students come from more sectors of society, especially Tribals, but also OBCs and Muslims.
- About twice a month, visitors from other organizations who want to emulate DSK and use it as a successful model visit the campus.
- Employability of students: about 50% plus of students find employment immediately after training.
- It is difficult for DSK to find new teachers from the pool past students, because many are employed and do not want to leave their jobs.
- Many youth who had been unemployed in their villages have now become income earners for their families.

## Challenges

- Developing plans to set up additional satellite centers to reduce the reliance on DSK presents logistical and other issues.
- Finding resources to fund DSK is difficult; the students cannot afford to pay the total cost required.
- Finding new vocational courses to keep pace with changing market demands is a constant challenge.
- Most students who come to DSK are school dropouts, so finding a balance in competitiveness is difficult.
- The disparity between boys and girls in both urban and rural societies provides a constant challenge.
- Many women lag behind educationally.

## 10. Community Video Unit (CVU):

The CVU, composed of members of the community trained as video producers, was established in collaboration with Drishti Media and Video Volunteers. By creating video magazines on issues relevant to the community, the CVU is a tool for grassroots change, awareness, mobilization, information and advocacy. It promotes participation, dialogue and community responsibility in order to stimulate behavioral change and encourage a community call to action.

### A. “Aapna Malak Ma”

The CVU produces news magazines every two months called “*Aapna Malak Ma*” (In Our Community), screening them in village centers for individuals of all castes. These videos focus on issues relevant to the residents of 25 villages in 3 talukas of Surendranagar District, the feudal heartland of Gujarat.

- During the year, the following *Aapna Malak Ma* videos were produced and screened:
  - *Leaving Additions*
  - *Atrocities against Women*
  - *Migration*



CVU Producers engaging the community in discussion after a screening

- In 79 village screenings, the total audience was composed of 3,187 women, 5440 men, and 5954 children.
- In addition, the CVU also helped make 40 short documentaries on specific cases for the Navsarjan zone teams.

## Impact

### Dalit issues

- Because the screenings are held in the village center and are such big events, many people across caste lines attend. This increases the connection and relationship between Dalits and non-Dalits.
- In many of the villages in which the films are screened, Dalits never speak out. But the films give voice to issues that face them, and after the screenings they have a chance to address the mixed-caste audience with a microphone. This gives them a feeling of empowerment.

### Women's issues

- Women across castes get together to talk about their common problems.
- Villagers and authorities are surprised and impressed that within the CVU, the women hold the cameras and have leadership positions.

## Power and politics

- Local government and the police have grown to fear the CVU because even they (i.e., government and police) do not know the law well, and the CVU members do know the law well. The CVU members sometimes even explain laws to the police.
- After the screenings, people accuse the village leaders of corruption and not doing anything, and demand action.
- Due to the film on *Leaving Addictions*, many cases were lodged against alcohol distillers, sellers, and drinkers, and the police were pressured to take action against them.
- Discussion on the *Migration* film has led to villagers getting job cards entitling them to local work that can prevent migration.

## Challenges

### Caste

- Sometimes Dalit women do not come to the screenings because they are afraid of non-Dalits.
- Darbars do not want Darbar women to go out and see the films (because of the *pardah* system, in which women are supposed to stay in the home).

### Gender

- Research for the *Atrocities against Women* film was very difficult, as most women did not want to share their experiences (especially relating to female feticide forced upon women by the husband's family). This caused a delay in the film's production.
- Many men became angry about the *Atrocities against Women* film and yelled at the CVU producers.

### Other

- Some men who came to the screenings were drunk and tried to cause trouble, particularly with the *Leaving Addictions* film which dealt alcohol addiction.
- There are problems because the screenings are in rural areas (power problems, rain problems, short circuits, etc.).

## 11. Center for Dalit Human Rights (CDHR):

The Center for Dalit Human Rights (CDHR), based in Ahmedabad, is the semi-autonomous legal wing of Navsarjan, working to register and prosecute atrocity cases and cases of violence against both Dalits and non-Dalits.

Though The Scheduled Castes and The Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act provides substantial protection to Dalits, the Act remains largely un-enforced due to both ignorance and active obstruction on the part of Gujarat's law enforcement, judiciary and executive agencies. The CDHR organizes mass gatherings of victims of atrocities at the district level in order to help individual victims circumvent obstacles inhibiting their cases from moving forward and determine larger patterns of un-enforcement of Dalit-protective legislation. Similarly, the CDHR has organized Public Hearings for victims of atrocities to voice their grievances. These events serve to help Dalits (and non-Dalit activists and journalists) understand the types of hurdles they face in registering atrocity cases, particularly as a result of police apathy or active antagonism, refusal of the government to provide a legally-mandated special Public Prosecutor in atrocities cases, and overall government inaction, among other reasons. The CDHR does not limit its legal advocacy to the state level. If a case is particularly grievous, and the government is obstructing the victim's access to justice, the CDHR will represent that case to the National Human Rights Commission, along with other national human rights mechanisms.

### A. Advocacy and Publicity

Because the government does not enforce its own legislation, the CDHR must continuously work to keep issues relating to atrocities against Dalits in the media, to understand how atrocity cases are being prevented from moving forward, and to push for their progress in the courts.

- 6 meetings were held with victims of atrocities in various districts in order to figure out what the victims needed, what was holding up their cases, if they had received compensation or not, etc., so that they could be helped better. 149 victims attended the meetings.
- Details of 62 cases in which the government was not taking action were sent to the National Human Rights Commission.

## B. Legal Capacity Building

Paralegals are trained at the village level as “barefoot lawyers” to take legal leadership in the community independent of Navsarjan, helping to lodge cases, and increasing community confidence. Combined with other types of legal trainings, the result of these efforts is an increased number of FIRs lodged and cases which reach their conclusion.

- 4 paralegal trainings were held for 102 participants.
- 2 trainings were held for 24 District Human Rights Defenders (DHRDs).
- 1 legal training was held for 28 manual scavengers.
- 1 Human rights training was held for 37 lawyers.



The CDHR team submitting a memorandum to the Ahmedabad District Collector concerning serious atrocities against Dalits

## A. Additional Activities

- Fact-finding missions were conducted at schools reported to discriminate against Dalit students.
- Fact-finding missions were conducted in cases of rape in which the police were not registering the case.
- Legal workshops were held for several other NGOs.
- Legal camps were held at DSK for students, concerning information and training about constitutional rights.

## Impact

### Judgments obtained during the reporting period:

1. The Session Court in Patan ruled in the case of the gang rape of a Dalit student by her 6 professors, convicting all 6 of the accused and sentencing them all to life imprisonment.
2. The Session Court in Mahesana ruled in the case of the serious injury of a Dalit, convicting 2 of the 5 dominant caste accused and sentencing them to 2 years imprisonment each.
3. The Fast Track Court in Mahesana ruled in the case of injury and caste-based abuse of a Dalit, convicting four dominant caste accused and sentencing them to 1 year imprisonment each.
4. The Session Court in Patan ruled in the case of the attack and physical abuse of a Dalit, convicting 3 accused and sentencing them to imprisonment.
5. The Session Court in Patan ruled in the case of the attack and caste based abuse of a Dalit, convicting 2 dominant caste accused and sentencing them to 6 months imprisonment each and a fine of Rs. 600 each.
6. The Fast Track Court in Botad ruled in the case of the attack and caste based abuse of a Dalit, convicting 2 dominant caste accused and sentencing them to 1 year imprisonment each.
7. The Fast Track Court in Botad ruled in the case of the attack and caste based abuse of a Dalit, convicting 3 dominant caste accused and sentencing them to 1 year imprisonment each.
8. The Fast Track Court in Botad ruled in the case of the attack and caste based abuse of a Dalit, convicting 4 dominant caste accused and sentencing them to 1 year imprisonment each.

9. The Fast Track Court in Visanagar ruled in the case of injury to a Dalit, convicting the four accused and sentencing them to six months imprisonment each.
10. The Fast Track Court in Visanagar ruled in the case of injury to a Dalit, convicting the three accused and sentencing them to two years imprisonment each.
11. The District Court in Nadiad ruled in the case of an ex-teacher causing injury to a Dalit, and sentenced him to six months imprisonment.
12. The Sessions Court in Nadiad ruled in the case of the murder of a Dalit Christian youth and serious injury of his mother, sentencing the accused to life imprisonment.
13. The Sessions Court in Gandhinagar ruled in the case of the rape of a minor Dalit girl, sentencing the accused to seven years imprisonment.
14. The Sessions Court in Nadiad ruled in the case of the murder of a Dalit, convicting the accused and sentencing him to life imprisonment.
15. The Fast Track Court in Botad ruled in the case of the destruction of a Dalit's crops and damage of his property, sentencing the accused from the Bharvad community to six months imprisonment.

## **Interventions**

- The conviction ratio due to Navsarjan's intervention is increasing.
- Compromises between victims and the accused are decreasing, demonstrating that victims are ready and willing to fight their cases.
- In the past, when manhole workers died, the deaths were registered as incidental deaths, preventing any legal case from being lodged. Because of Navsarjan's continued intervention, however, several cases of the death of a manhole worker have been registered under IPC (Indian Penal Code) 304 (A) Negligence of duty of a public servant and also 3 (1) 6 forced labour.

## **Capacity Building**

- Paralegal trainings are increasing legal awareness of Dalits at the grassroots level, leading to more atrocity cases being lodged
- District Human Rights Defender (DHRD) trainings have led to many complaints being filed with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). Gujarat now stands as the state that has the 3<sup>rd</sup> most complaints registered against it in India. This has led to the government taking faster action in incidents of human rights violations.
- The media has become more sensitive towards Dalit issues, and good relations with the media are maintained.
- There has been some degree of government sensitization on issues facing Dalits and relating to the Atrocity Act.

## **Challenges**

- Convictions are happening, but the sentences are far lower than they ought to be as per sentencing guidelines.
- Registering the First Information Report (FIR, which is the first step in the creation of a case) generally takes far too long, if it happens at all, because of the following reasons:

- Police officers seldom care about atrocity cases,
- Police officers think that Dalits are registering false cases,
- Police officers do not know about the Atrocities Act, so sometimes they do not even realize what is illegal.
- There should be a special public prosecutor for atrocity cases according to the Atrocity Act, but there is none.
- Judges and the prosecutor himself pressure for a compromise instead of for justice.
- The accused often file false cross-complaints against the accusers, complicating the case and slowing it down considerably.
- When there is social boycott and forced migration, the government does not recognize it, causing further hardships.
- The demand for Navsarjan's help by the public exceeds Navsarjan's ability to assist.

## DIVERSITY CHARTS

Category	Male	Female	Total
Employee	107	52	159
Trainee	5	6	11
Teacher	13	5	18
Advocate	7	1	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>196</b>
<b>Percentages</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## NAVSARJAN TRUST GOVERNING BODY

Sr.	NAME	OCCUPATION	POSITION
1	Prof. Sukhdeo Thorat	U.G.C. Chairperson	Chairperson
2	Ms. Manjula Pradeep	Activist	Director / Executive Secretary
3	Mrs. Jyoti Raj	Activist	Trustee
4	Dr. Syeda Hameed	Member of National planning commission	Trustee
5	Mrs. Mari Marcel Thekaekara	Journalist / Activist	Trustee
6	Mr. Gagan S Sethi	Activist	Trustee
7	Mr. Amitabh Behar	Activist	Trustee
8	Ms. Mallika Sarabhai	Activist	Trustee
9	Prof. Ghanshyam Shah	Retired Professor	Trustee

## ABRIDGED BALANCE SHEET AS ON 31ST MARCH 2009

PARTICULARS	2008-2009		2007-2008	
	Amount (Rs.)	%	Amount (Rs.)	%
<b>FUNDS AND LIABILITIES</b>				
Trust funds or Corpus	30,761,380	14.94	31,025,491	16.94
Other Earmarked funds	157,137,594	76.33	142,881,983	77.99
Liabilities ( Unutilised grants)	17,980,072	8.73	9,290,866	5.07
<b>Total</b>	<b>205,879,046</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>183,198,340</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>ASSETS AND PROPERTIES</b>				
Fixed Assets	66,971,367	32.53	63,215,490	34.51
Investments	37,042,000	17.99	37,042,000	20.22
Loans and advances	3,702,844	1.80	2,970,215	1.62
Current assets	76,383,569	37.10	61,163,918	33.39
Income & Expenditure A/c Balance	21,779,266	10.58	18,806,717	10.27
<b>Total</b>	<b>205,879,046</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>183,198,340</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Manjula Pradeep**  
Executive Director  
Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

**H Rustom & Co.**  
Chartered Accountants  
Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

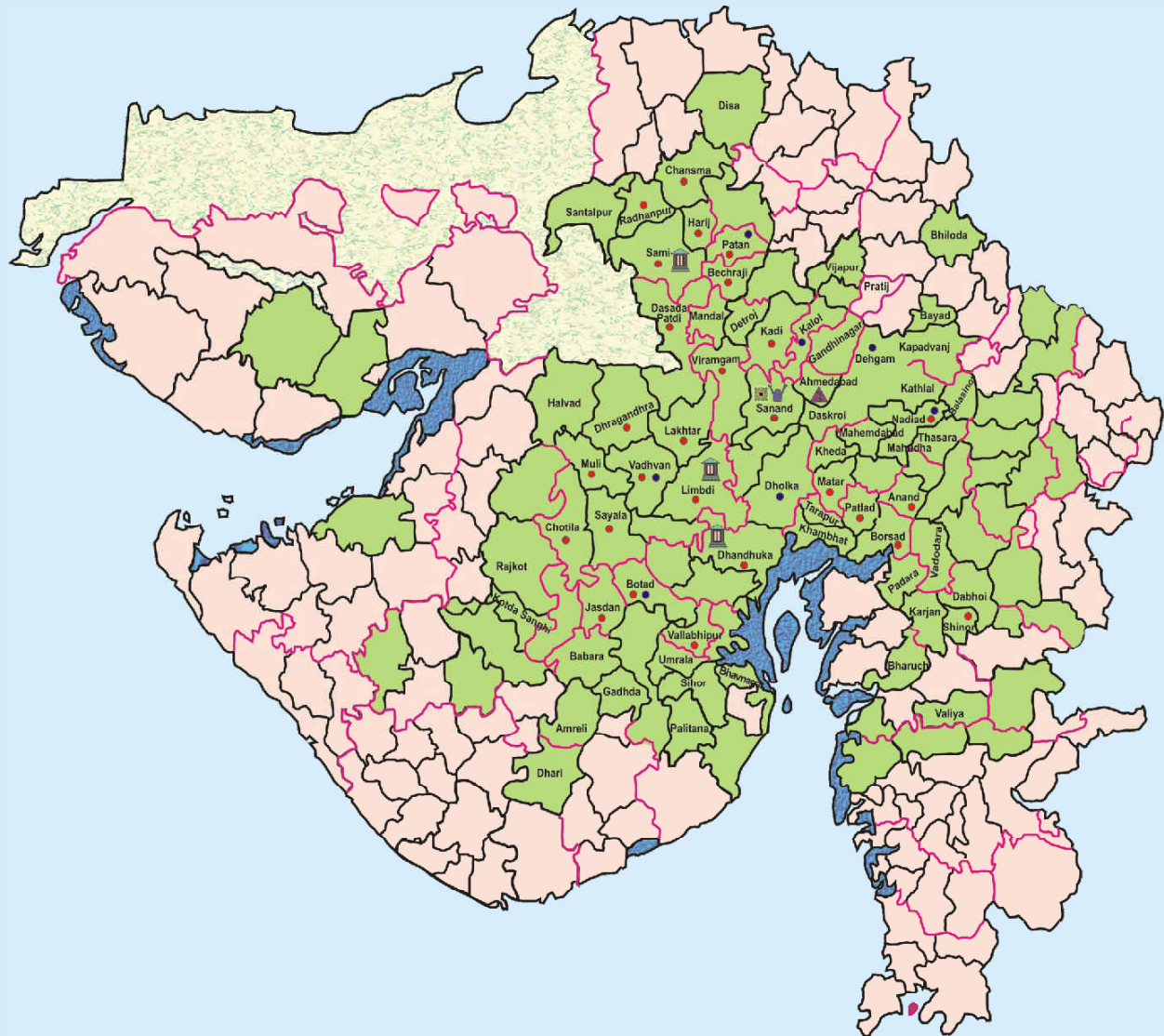
## ABRIDGED INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD FROM 1ST APRIL 2008 TO 31ST MARCH 2009

PARTICULARS	2008-2009		2007-2008	
	Amount (Rs.)	%	Amount (Rs.)	%
<b>Income</b>				
<b>Indian Sources</b>				
Grant income	244,484	0.41	-	0.00
Donation income	1,188,984	1.98	299,447	0.66
Other income	7,111,370	11.84	5,904,620	13.02
<b>International Sources</b>				
Grant income	43,040,766	71.65	22,264,886	49.09
Donation income	16,326	0.03	1,390,777	3.07
Interest income	5,493,803	9.15	2,568,085	5.66
Profit on sale of assets	-	0.00	478,428	1.05
Excess of Expenditure over Income	2,972,549	4.95	12,447,932	27.45
<b>Total</b>	<b>60,068,282</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>45,354,175</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
<b>Expenditure on the objects of the Trust</b>				
Programme expenditure	19,572,922	32.58	20,646,561	45.52
Programme staff expenditure	16,774,786	27.93	13,669,781	30.14
Programme admin expenditure	4,957,687	8.25	1,839,946	4.06
Establishment expenditure	2,960,761	4.93	2,886,703	6.36
Audit Fees	89,888	0.15	78,568	0.17
Charity Commissioner Contribution	50,000	0.08	50,000	0.11
Office Rent	509,031	0.85	324,350	0.72
Remuneration to trustees	400,404	0.67	329,412	0.73
Depreciation	4,712,443	7.85	4,417,096	9.74
Transfer to corpus fund	(264,111)	(0.44)	(238,713)	(0.53)
Transferred to the Assets Fund	3,755,877	6.25	6,650,846	14.66
Transferred to the Earmarked Fund	6,423,327	10.69	(5,300,375)	(11.69)
Loss on sale of assets	125,267	0.21	0	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>60,068,282</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>45,354,175</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Manjula Pradeep**  
Executive Director  
Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

**H Rustom & Co.**  
Chartered Accountants  
Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

# Information about Navsarjan Field offices



- **Zone Office**
- **Taluka Office**
- 🏫 **Navsarjan's School**
- 🏠 **Navsarjan's Head Office**
- 👤 **Dalit Shakti Kendra**
- ⚠️ **C.D.H.R. Head Office**

Navsarjan works most intensively in the marked areas, but handles cases of grievous violence and atrocities all across the state.