

Activities Progress report for the period April 2009 to March 2010

From the Secretary

With utmost gratefulness and regards for all the stake holders-which include our partner organizations, our dedicated staff/volunteers and above all the community where we work-of Urmul Jyoti Sansthan take this opportunity to make the annual report for 2010 of our organization public. Before you go through the actual report, I would like to share with you a couple of things regarding our values and philosophy about social **development**.

Based upon my learning and experience, I believe the word **development** is just another tool of exploitation in the hands of the socially and economically advantaged class unless it is participatory in nature. We see development as a continuous and complex process that empowers people and communities to fight disadvantage, take control of their future and fulfill their potential. People want to, and have a right to, decide their priorities in life. So forcing ready-made solutions to the social problems won't work. Community's participation is necessary in the process of their own development to bring a lasting and sustainable change.

My journey of more than two decades in the social development sector has revealed to me that common rural people better know what they need; they even know the methods of achieving them. But they lack access to resources, they lack awareness about the development schemes; they lack platforms where they can express themselves. And that is where our role comes in-to link them with the social and state resources and to create opportunities to bring out the latent potential in them.

Despite a significant change, there are still some evil practices among the rural people, like caste system, child marriage, suppression of women and discrimination against the girl child, which violate the basic human rights. Fighting these evils by radical social movements has not produced results of such magnitude as can be had by modern education, especially of girls'. Driven by this philosophy, our core areas of work include Girls' education camps (**Balika Shivirs**), **Jagruk Nagrik Manch** (Peoples' campaign for good governance) and **Jyoti Eye Hospital**. Since development is a continuous process where there is always room for improvement at every stage. The story with us has been the same. We will not pretend to say that we have achieved all we wanted and needed to. But, in the following pages, we make a humble attempt to convey the story of our struggles and success spreading over thirteen years of our work, with special focus on the year 2010

But for the support from our partner organizations like, Sir Ratan Tata Trust, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust Sight Savers International, State/Central govt, Urmul Trust, Bikaner, American India Foundation (AIF), Room-to-Read ,Plan India, CARE India, Action Aid, Asha for Education, Save the Children, Millennium Trust and above all the community and the committed staff/volunteers of the Urmul Jyoti Sansthan, the results would not have been as astounding as you would see in the next few pages of this report.

Your valuable suggestions and support to better our endeavors are most sought-after.

Warm Regards,

Chetan Ram,

Founder/Secretary,
Urmul Jyoti Sansthan,
Nokha, Rajasthan, India



Urmul Jyoti Sansthan

... developing rural India – the participatory way

Urmul Jyoti Sansthan, was formally registered as a society under Rajasthan Societies Registration Act 1958 in February 1996. The organization owes its origin to Urmul Rural Health Research and Development Trust which was founded by Shri Sanjay Ghosh in 1986. The trust was working in the desert districts of Bikaner, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Barmer, Churu and Nagaur for programs like healthcare facilities, education, drought relief, water conservation and also weaving and handicraft. **Urmul Jyoti sansthan** was born as result of decentralization process initiated by the Urmul Trust to localize the operations and enhance effectiveness and community participation in the programs. Chetanram, a civil engineer who had worked with the Urmul Trust since 1987, is the founder/secretary of UJS. The campus of UJS is situated at Nokha, Bikaner, Rajasthan.



Urmul Jyoti Sansthan camps at Nokha, Bikaner

Vision: We envision a democratic, developed and just rural society where people, irrespective of caste, creed, gender or religion, have equal access to state and social resources.

Mission: To organize the marginalized rural communities and facilitate their active participation in the process of their own development. To equip rural people with skills so that they can access and benefit from the government and other peoples' development schemes. In so doing, women and children will be our special focus.

Our Broad Objectives:

- ▶ To ensure openness and transparency in our own practices.
- ▶ To raise awareness on development issues among vulnerable groups of people.
- ▶ To involve people in the development process and enable them to take responsibility for their own development
- ▶ To encourage the spirit of openness in the govt. development process.
- ▶ To undertake development projects in partnership with other organizations and groups of vulnerable people. Our priority will be adolescent girls' education, eye healthcare and good governance
- ▶ Co-operate with, and influence the government machinery as and when required for the benefit of vulnerable groups of people.
- ▶ Create opportunities for health care, education, agriculture and livelihood for women and marginalized sections.
- ▶ To establish good governance by making proper use and implementation of **RTI, NREGA and other Act.etc**

Our geographical Area of work

Nokha a small mandi town in the midst of the Great Indian Thar Desert 60 km south of the Bikaner district headquarters. Comprising a total of 53 Gram Panchayats which include over 147 revenue villages with a population of a little over 3.3 lakhs. The town itself has a population of around 60,000 and the rest of the population are spread and scattered over the surrounding villages in settlements called dhanies. The population density is as low as 58 people per sq.km. Nokha is the seat of the sub-divisional headquarters and is popular for its Moth Mandi, said to be the largest in the continent.

Demography

Nokha town and the surrounding villages under its Administrative Jurisdiction are home to diverse communities. The majority are Hindus. Muslims are also significant in number (About 12000) but in the town only with quite a few families living in the open regions (Dhanies). Muslims in Rajasthan are given the reservation status as OBCs. Among the Hindus, there are different caste denominations namely, Jats, Bishnois, Rajputs, Brahmins and Banias. The other Hindu sub-castes, the scheduled castes (SC) are also significant (About 30%). These include Meghwals, Naiks, Sansis and Satias. The Jats and Bishnois, who are also included in the OBC status, comprise the largest caste in terms of population (about 60%). The remaining 7-8% comprise, what is called here, the 'upper castes'. These include Brahmins and Rajputs.

Caste plays an influential role in the political, economic and social arenas with instances of discrimination on the basis of caste quite common. The Schedule Castes are the most underprivileged sections of Nokha and are facing disadvantage, imposed by birth and other circumstances, as compared to so called upper castes. Social evils such as child marriage, child labour, female foeticide, and suppression of women are quite prevalent. The overall literacy in the region is much lower than the national average and still worse in case of females. Owing to illiteracy, superstitions and dogmatic beliefs are a commonplace over here.

General Profile of Western Rajasthan

- ▶ Part of the Great Indian Thar Desert.
- ▶ Extreme temperatures (Sub-zero during winters to 50°C during summers).
- ▶ Annual average rain fall: 10 cm – 40 cm.
- ▶ 30% to 40% area covered by sand dunes.
- ▶ 60% to 70% plain arid agricultural area.
- ▶ Ground water resources: 1% of National resources.
- ▶ Water table depth: 250 – 300 feet.

- ▶ 80% of population lives in villages.
- ▶ Low Population density with scattered small habitations and hamlets.
- ▶ Seasonal settlement patterns.
- ▶ Literacy rate: 20-25%.
- ▶ Prevalent social evils: Child marriage, child labour, female feticide.
- ▶ Women and Child malnutrition and high child mortality rate.
- ▶ Curable optic problems like cataract, glaucoma etc common among the elderly.

Economy

The major contributors of the economy of this region are as under:

- ▶ Majority of marginalized farmers, 35% living below poverty line (BPL)
- ▶ Major crops: Mainly rain-fed, like moth, bajra, tilhen and guwar
- ▶ Only 2-3% of the farmers, who have got water tube wells, able to grow two crops a year
- ▶ Daily wage (unskilled) labourers form a major section of the economy, most of them working in nearby factories and brick kilns and others migrate to other states for employment.
- ▶ People are also largely dependent on government employment schemes like NREGA.
- ▶ The other major occupation is livestock rearing which includes camel, cow, buffalo, sheep and goat

Major problems meriting intervention:

- ▶ Frequent droughts resulting in scarcity of food, drinking water and unemployment
- ▶ Discrimination against women and girl child thus keeping a large section of population from normal socially functioning.
- ▶ Rampant illiteracy, especially among girls, leading to the practice of superstitious and dogmatic beliefs thus festering further backwardness
- ▶ Prevalence of social evils like Child marriage and child labour.
- ▶ Malnutrition among women and children and high child mortality rate.
- ▶ Lack of health and hygiene awareness and lack of modern healthcare infrastructure.
- ▶ Lack of awareness about various govt.welfare and rural development schemes leading to exploitation of the poor people and corruption in the officialdom.
- ▶ Lack of proper functioning of the local body govt (PRI), creating a sense of mistrust among the people towards the govt and democracy.
- ▶ Ophthalmologic (eye) problems like cataract and glaucoma due to very hot summers leading to full or partial loss of vision.
- ▶ Lack of a collective platform where people can express their needs and work towards their fulfillment.
- ▶ Increasing population due to lack of awareness about family planning methods.

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OUR APPROACHES

Means are as important to us as ends. There for, we are as particular about the way we pursue our social/developmental goals as we are about achieving them. In reflecting on our core philosophy, we have identified four areas which will be very important to how we tackle the social problems. These are:

- 1) Empowerment
- 2) Partnership and participation
- 3) Sensitization of the community
- 4) Learning-by-doing
- 5) Openness and transparency

Empowerment:

Empowerment, especially of the disadvantaged groups like women, is central to all UJS' activities Empowerment to us is strengthening the capacity and confidence of individuals and communities to take control of their future, and addressing the structural inequalities and barriers that prevent people from exercising their rights. We also work to address the power imbalance between the rich and the poor by advocating a change in the government and social policies and practices. In order to realize our vision, we implement such modus operandi as will share the power and responsibility, and maximize the contribution of each partner to our shared programs. We also find ways to share power and responsibility among our staff across the organization and employ efforts to become a more diverse organization.

Partnership and participation:

Problems in our society are so much and so complex that no government or organization can take on the challenges alone. Therefore we need partnerships coming from all available resources such as, public, private, local, national and global to tackle the problems more effectively and efficiently. We build strategic partnerships with other organizations and government departments with similar objectives and interests as ours in order to have resources for our activities. Driven by our core value that community's participation in the process of their own development is essential for its sustainability, we do not believe in forcing ready-made solutions to social problems. Unless people involve themselves and contribute towards the attainment of set goals of a program, the outside intervention will not have a lasting impact. We ensure participation across all the sections of the community in the process of prioritizing and implementing various development programs. Other than funds, these partners enrich our programs with their interests, concerns and perspectives. Making participatory approach integral to our work, we also get a chance to analyze problems together, find solutions and shape common plans of intervention. That our Balika Shivar Campus at Mukam has been provided by the Bishnoi community free of cost, speaks about how we put our approaches in practice.

Sensitization of the community:

We believe that the major role of civil society organizations and groups must be to work as a screen in which the community can view their lives like a movie. People need to be shown a window through which they will understand that they can live a better quality life by mobilizing their own state and social resources. Whatever we do, one of the core purpose remains to sensitize the community about their rights in different walks of life as assured in a democracy. We put our best efforts into practice to show the community where we work as to how their life is and how it could be and must be. In our works we put before people a model of service with transparency and dedication so that they can demand the same from the govt. especially the local body (PRI). Our girls education program aims to sensitize the community towards the rights of the women who have since long been suppressed. Through our Balika shivir, besides education, we want people to know that their children deserve the same quality education with a decent infrastructure in the govt. schools too. We want that our par-excellence services in eye care at Jyoti Hospital, besides restoring vision, opens the eyes of the community and make them look for facilities like this in the government hospitals. Our humble endeavors of development also help to create a sort of pressure in the community and provide them some food for thought. We believe, at one or the other point of time people will start thinking as to why they can not have the same service delivery from other agencies like the government. Through our work, we want to let people know what they deserve and what their rights are. In nut shell, we attempt to create a model of a **'life-with-dignity and honor'** so that people may aspire, mobilize and work for the attainment of such a life.

Learning-by-doing:

Research says that 83% of our learning happens during doing only. Learning is essential for all kinds of development. Change is more sustainable when it is built on the skills, knowledge and understanding acquired through experience. We resolve to learn actively, systematically and continuously from our own and others' experiences so that we can do it better the every second time. We employ effective monitoring and evaluation techniques to identify the loopholes, if any, in our methods and put in better practices to make the best of available resources. Other than training our staff and volunteers through HR experts, we largely believe in learning on-the-job. Rather than sticking to traditional methods of intervention, we give a lot of weight age to innovative and newer methods that are harmonious with the local environment.

Openness and transparency :

We employ openness and transparency in all our practices and want to be seen as such. We know that our system is so deeply corrupted that it is very difficult to break through it. But we also believe that corruption is not inevitable and change is possible. By our fair practices we want to be like a sparkle in the darkness to make people see what lies around. We conduct monthly general review meetings wherein persons responsible for various programs detail the activities of the month. Following which there are interactive sessions which include exchange of ideas about shortcomings, admirations and appreciations. Besides, there are also group meetings where people responsible for specific programs discuss the progress of the monthly activities. Our accounts and operations are open for the inspection to any of the stake holders, including general public.

We also try to bring the best possible fairness in our activities by a comprehensive data and report keeping system. Some examples are:

- Name register which contains students' names as well as names of parents, village, caste, age and address.
- Core group register which is updated daily and contains all activities conducted in a day as well as program for the next day.
- Health register which contains details of individual girls health status including weight, age, disease / sickness etc.
- Visitor register.
- Diet register.
- Bill-voucher registers which maintains all expenses of the shivirs.
- Stock register.
- Public assistance register which contains all kinds of assistance given by various members of the public.
- Progress register which contains educational progress of each girl
- Attendance register.
- Opinion register which contains opinions and suggestions of visitors and public.
- Logbook for all official vehicles.

Monitoring and evaluation:

Monitoring and evaluation are as important to us as the program itself. We believe proper methods of monitoring and evaluation bring efficiency and effectiveness in a developmental program. It also signals us about any loopholes left in a particular activity or program. Broadly speaking, we have a three-way system of monitoring and evaluating our programs. However, the methods employed vary from program to program, depending upon the nature of the intervention.

Internal Assessment:

This is conducted by our own staff. The resource persons for this purpose are properly identified, trained and then briefed about conducting the evaluation process. Wide arrays of tools, depending upon the nature of the program, are used to gather, analyze and interpret the data. For example in our adolescent girls' education program, we use **single-subject research design method**. A Baseline is taken at the time of admitting a student in the camp. This is done by testing the reading, writing, comprehension skills and confidence level of the student. Post this, intervention in the form of tuitions by trained teachers, opportunities to play and develop vocational skills are provided throughout the camp duration (210 days). In the middle of the program, level of the student is again recorded on the earlier measured parameters. The difference gives the estimate of the progress and changes (if needed) to be made. Besides this, the real indicator of the progress is when the students are examined by an outside (Govt.) authority for the purpose of certification. The other tools used include surveys, interviews and questionnaires etc.

External Monitoring:

The other major part of our monitoring and evaluation comes from our funding organizations. They have their own standardized methods to evaluate the progress of programs they support us for. In addition to that we also adhere to their policy of recording the data in their pre-set formats on regular basis.

Participatory evaluation:

This is the collective examination and assessment of a program or project by the stakeholders and beneficiaries. Participatory evaluations are reflective, action-oriented and seek to build capacity and bring empowerment. We usually employ such methods in evaluating our programs relating to good governance. Evaluator in participatory evaluations, the stakeholders or program end-users and/or beneficiaries, who are involved in all stages of the evaluation process, from defining the terms of reference and collecting and analyzing data to making recommendations and taking corrective action or making improvements.

Our major works

Female literacy

Balika Shivirs (Residential Girls' Education/Vocational training Camps)

Residential Girls' Education camps at Mukam, Nokha is spread over about 28000 sq feet with a single storey building comprising 31 rooms and 2 big halls. The campus has adequate number of flush toilets and drinking water facilities in it. While the female staff members live with the girls in the camp, there is a separate residential quarter for the male staff working in the Shivir.

The Balika Shivirs enroll girls in the age group 9 to 15 years particularly those from remote areas and with no schools nearby and those belonging to the poor and deprived sections of the society. Most of these girls have never been to a school-now too old for admission in a government school and some are dropouts. In a short span of seven months they are prepared to sit for their Class V exams which are conducted and supervised by officials deputed by the Block Officer. On passing these exams the girls are provided with official certificates.

Learning in these camps is an integrated affair. Students are not rushed through with their curricula and it is ensured that apart from book learning other skills and extra curricular activities are included in the daily routine of the students. Vocational training to enable the girls generate some earning is also a part of the activities in the camp life.

Once the girls have completed 7 months and passed their exams they are then enrolled in the government schools in Class VI. However there are those who are unable to pursue education for various familial reasons and return home. It has surfaced that one reason is the lack of secondary schools in the villages. These and other such girls are then provided with the opportunity to attend another camp, this time to sit for their Class VIII exams directly. The modus operandi remains similar to the earlier camp. Finally, Shivirs also provide coaching classes for girls wanting to sit for their Class 10th board exams. Being a matriculate can change a lot in the life of ordinary rural women. Teachers at the shivirs are all trained females who live with the students in the camp. To make learning interesting, efficient and fast, we use innovative methods like songs ,plays, games etc. besides the formal tutoring That's how girls cover so much in so short a span. One strong indicator of the community participation and involvement in the program is that the campus for the Balika Shivirs at Mukam has been provided to **UJS** by the Bishnoi community free of cost as a good will. The campus, being actually a community centre, is perfectly fit, safe and secure for a controlled education program, especially of adolescent girls. Besides; it is centrally located on the main road to cater to the educational needs of girls coming from the surrounding villages and hamlets

A day in the Girls' camp

Time period	Activity
6-7.30am	Wake up/bath
7.30-8am	prayer
8-9 am	breakfast
9-12noon	lessons
12-2.3pm	lunch /rest
2.30-6pm	lessons
6-7pm	playtime
7-8pm	dinner
8-9pm	moral/hygiene
9-10pm	self study
10pm	bed time

Achievements:

- 23 Shivirs (Camps) have been conducted till the year end, 2009/10.
- A total of 2351 girls have passed out from the ballika shivirs from 1999 to 2010
- 45% girls passing Class 5th have been enrolled in government schools
- 532 girls have passed out from the coaching camps for Class 8th through 6 camps.
- 41 girls have passed from the coaching camps for Class 10th initiated in 2007-10
- 547 girls have been enabled with vocational training since 2003 through 16 camps
- The shivirs have an outreach in over 50 villages
- More than 95% of the girls sitting for Class 5th exams have passed
- Pass rate for girls sitting for Class 8th exams is over 70 %

At the camp girls also learn that marrying below 18 is a social evil and harmful to female health.this helps prevent

After the camp 55% girls enroll in government schools, 25% get married or are in the process of getting married and 25% return to enroll in another camp to pass the 8th standard

Other than academic tuitions, a selected number of girls are given vocational training like tailoring, knitting, embroidery work, local soap making ,journalism etc. to enable them generate some income for themselves.

Social categorization of girls benefited

Time Period	General	schedule castes	OBC	Total
1999-2009	222	580	1334	2241
2010	12	42	51	105

Time Period	No. of girls imparted vocational training
2003-09	547
2010	-

Age wise categorization/ marital status of girls benefited

Time Period	10 -12 years	13 -15 years	above 15 years	married	unmarried
1999-2009	443	1411	328	723	1518
2010	43	48	14	19	86

Time period	No. of girls attended in 8 th class	No of Girls attended in 10 th class
2008-09	480	30
2010	52	11

Coaching camps for class 8th and 10th

Project impact

Year	Girls enrolment in govt. schools, Nokha East (project area)		Girls enrolment in govt schools, Nokha West (Non-Project area)	
	class VI	class VIII	class VI	class VIII
1997	06	02	11	03
2006	87	60	57	19

The surge in the enrolment of girls in the Nokha east as compared to Nokha west from 1997 to 2006 is a result of our Balika Shivir program running in the area. Our program has sensitized the community to towards girls' rights and education.

Some case studies:

"I am very confident about passing my upcoming 10th class board exams. I intend to continue my studies even after that. I will try to find a job somewhere. At least i will be able to teach my younger siblings back home. When i have my own children, I will definitely give them a

"My ward could not go to a formal school because the nearest govt. school is 4kms from our village. I heard about the Balika Shivir and decided to send her here. I want to empower her with education, at least 10th pass, before marrying her off. That will help her become a good mother", (Nainu-grand

"But for the Balika shivirs, these girls would have been married off and some of them would have been grazing cattle. Not more than 10% of them would have been in schools" (A local resident of Mukam, Nokha)

Ballika Manch / Girls' Forum

A platform outside the camp wherein the Balika Shivar passouts share and spread their knowledge and experience among other illiterate girls in the community. This Girl's Forum is another innovation of UJS in its female literacy campaign and today has a presence in 30 villages. It also paved the way for setting up of a residential camp for girls wanting to pass through Class 8th and 10th.

These Ballika Manchs meet monthly and through them domestic issues are discussed, shared and efforts made at resolving them. Health education is a priority and so is encouraging other village girls to get enrolled in schools or the shivirs.

The Ballika Manch, further to consolidate their position, hold annual camps or Samagam lasting four days during which various subjects are discussed and information disseminated including on –

- girls education and women's health
- government schemes
- child rights and laws including those regarding violence against women
- personal health and hygiene
- panchayati Raj and women's' participation

Besides there are fun programs such as plays, sports, songs, film screening etc. Enabling the girls with income generating skills is not ignored. The Shivirs have taken care to incorporate vocational training, mainly comprising of sewing, in the curricula. Started from 2003, two camps of 50 days each are held each year to enable the girls generate some income for themselves.

The broad activities in the balika shivar which lead to the achievement of our goals of the program are:

1. Adolescent girls' residential education camp up to class 5th.
2. Vocational Training of selected Girls, minimum 50 girls each year
3. Coaching camps for class 8th and 10th for camp pass outs or other school dropouts.
4. Follow up activities through balika Munch and balika mela

As part of our girls' education program, we also support girls, who aspire to go for higher education, in terms of a little finance, books, note books etc. Our community mobilizers also help for strengthening the govt school system by working along with the community to demand for proper staff and infrastructure in the govt schools. They also work for enhancing the enrolment of girls in the schools by raising awareness about the importance of the girls' education among the community.

Balak shivar (Boy's residential education camp)

As a pilot (experimental) program in our educational endeavor, a boys' residential education camp on the pattern of Balika shivirs was also undertaken by UJS. The camp had 50 students, again those who due to various disadvantages in their lives, could not study in a formal school. The below table shows the categorization of the students, according to age and socio-economic status, who were enrolled in the camp.

Boys' camps: data

Through Two camps total 98 boys benefited

11-12 yrs	13-14 yrs	15+yrs	SC	General	OBC	Married	Unmarried
44	42	12	56	8	34	13	85
Total		98			98		98

Jyoti Eye Hospital

...eliminating avoidable blindness

Supported by the Sight Savers International and Local peoples contribution, we are working in our area to combat blindness among the rural communities through specialist treatment and eye care to realize the world's **VISION 2020**. The **Jyoti Eye Hospital** is known throughout the western state of Rajasthan and has today acquired a name and reputation for itself beyond the state's boundaries as well. This Hospital is one of the three flagship programs of **Urmul Jyoti Sansthan** set up at its campus at Nokha where people from all over the district, state as well as from other states today converge to avail of eye treatment, surgery and optic advice. The jyoti Hospital today has 50 beds with a separate female ward, adequate flush toilets and bathrooms in a complete hygienic condition. It has a state-of-

the-art infrastructure with ultra modern equipment like Operating microscope, Slit lamp, Keratometer, Ascan, Yag laser, Auto-refractometer, Green Laser etc .Needless to say ,the operation theatre is par excellence with air conditioning/heating facilities. Our skilled human resource include 2 eye surgeons and 7 paramedical, most of them residents and available 24x7. Another informative and demystifying facility which the hospital has incorporated is the live screening of the surgical process. This is done with the help of an LCD monitor which beams the operation live to viewers (attendants of the patients) so that they can understand the process.

Owing to very hot and dry weather conditions, ophthalmologic (eye) problems like cataract and glaucoma are common in the region, especially among the elderly people. No wonder then, that during any given week an average of about **84** surgeries for various sight disorders are conducted at **Jyoti Eye Hospital** only. Surgeries are conducted every Sunday and Wednesday for which patients are admitted one day earlier. The hospital has residential facilities where patients are accommodated and provided with food and medicines, free of cost. Patients are encouraged to pay 40% of the total cost of surgery while spectacles are charged a nominal price.

Noteworthy to mention, patients from very poor economic

background are treated free of cost. Surgeries aside, the hospital also witnesses a huge rush of patients in the out-patient department (OPD). During any week about 500 patients visit our OPD.

Special Activities about eye health care.

Apart from the Hospital itself the Jyoti Eye Hospital also conducts special or field activities in the course of the year. These include organizing

- diagnostic camps in the villages to identify and diagnose rural folk who might be suffering from eye diseases
- Organizing screening camps in the schools for examining the children who may be experiencing eye problems
- a teachers' training program in which government school teachers are trained on the finer points of primary eye care

Diagnostic camps are conducted in the villages on an average of 2 per month or as and when deemed necessary. The area of conduction of such camps includes all villages in the Nokha Block. During such camps all residents of the villages are invited to attend the camp which not only involves free eye check ups but also information on proper eye care. These camps are essential in identifying the kinds of eye ailments afflicting the rural population, their causes as well as the approximate number of people afflicted with such problems. Those identified with eye ailments are advised to come to the Jyoti Eye Hospital at Nokha for further treatment.

On the other hand these camps are also a tool of maintaining contact with the village people and gaining ground among them and familiarizing the people with the institution as well as the other way around. Other problems of the people also surface in these camps.

The school screening camps are organized on an average of 10 schools a month. During such screening programs those children with eye problems are identified and the hospital then undertakes to treat these children with proper care and surgery if required. It has emerged that 5 % of the school children have been diagnosed to suffer from cataract, especially traumatic cataract. The youngest patient the hospital has had so far is a 4 year old child.

Besides, the hospital also holds day long training for teachers in the schools. This training is on primary eye health care.

Vision Centers : As part of the outreach program, Jyoti eye hospital has established two vision centres, one at Village Jasarasar, 50kms to the east and the other at Panchu, 40kms to the west of Nokha. Each center is staffed with one paramedic with proper instruments to diagnose the patients. First-aid related to eye care is provided on-spot and others are referred to the Jyoti hospital, where they are thoroughly examined and accordingly treated. Vision centres remain open two days a week-Tuesday and Saturday.

Follow up: All patients treated at JEH, especially those who undergo surgery, are called for a follow -up in a week's time. This activity is an indicator of the success rate of our surgical procedures. The beneficiaries themselves state that the success rate is nothing less than **100%**.

Year-wise data of surgeries conducted and OPD Checkups.

Time Period	IOL (Cataract)	Non IOL (Cataract)	Trabe (glaucoma)	Other	Total	No. of patients treated in OPD
2002-09	17705	193	636	380	18914	112801
2010	3580	19	91	44	3973	18900

Jagruk Nagrik Manch (Forum of aware citizens)

- Peoples' Campaign for Good Governance

While the Preamble of the Indian Constitution begins with the gregarious “**We the People...**” democracy in India is far from participatory. The only two classes of people are those who govern and those who are governed and the gap between the two is ever increasing. This results in a regime of secrecy and unaccountability in which officials thrive and there exists a nexus between them and the executing agencies / persons. Consequently and intentionally the general public is at the receiving end being exploited at all stages of the administration.

With a belief that injustice is not inevitable and can be done away with collectively, we responded with the formation of a platform called **JNM** (Jagruk Nagrik Manch), yet another major flagship program of **Urmul Jyoti**. Started in 1999 at Nokha, Bikaner, with a handful of members JNM today has about 700 members-40% of them being women-in as many as 90 villages. **Membership is open to all adults cutting across the barriers of caste, class, religion and gender.** JNM works for the promotion of good governance, honesty and transparency in implementation of government schemes keeping a vigilant eye on governmental procedures. It employs various means for demanding state accountability which can vary from using the Right to Information Act, to using the media and to organizing the masses for a collective demonstration. As such it acts as a pressure group which not only ensures that ethical and standard procedures are adhered to at every level of administration but also that there is no exploitation of the general public. The resounding success of JNM today is best exemplified by the fact that government officials themselves at times seek assistance of the Manch.

Social categorization of JNM members up to 31st March 2010

SC		OBC		General		Total
M	F	M	F	M	F	
280	102	195	40	95	38	750

SOOCHNA KENDRA (Information centre)

The Manch carries out its activities from its Soochna Kendra located in Nokha town near the Tehsil administration and block development offices. The Kendra has a formal full-time staff with field workers. The staff and members are selected through a formal procedure and are properly trained for the job.

Information available at the Kendra includes:

- List of families below poverty line(BPL)
- PDS - list of dealers and other related information.
- All govt. employment and welfare schemes and their procedure
- Copies of FIRs relating to important disputes.
- List of ICDS (Anganwardi) centres and other related information.
- List of PRI members, Gram panchayat and its operational procedure.
- List of schools, teachers, number of students, and information regarding Midday meal, SSA.
- List of Health centers and sub-centers including information about the staff and facilities available
- List of DLC approved land prices.
- Priority list of pending agriculture power connections.
- Phone/Fax numbers of tehsil and district level offices.
- The Kendra also helps in collecting specific information required by the member.

JNM also publishes a quarterly magazine named **Gram Jyoti** for dissemination of information. Besides, pamphlets carrying information relating to specific occasion like assembly and panchayati raj elections are also distributed to disseminate information. On any given working day, 30-40 people visit the JNM's Soochna Kendra for various reasons. Apart from being updated through newspapers and interactions with the JNM office bearers, they are also provided assistance in putting forward their complaints and grievances to the concerned officials in the various departments. Volunteers of JNM help in drafting applications with relevant details and pleas for redressal which are then submitted by the individual villagers to the concerned authority. Whether it be BPL beneficiaries or SC beneficiaries or widows or senior citizens or any other category of people including educated unemployed, the JNM ensures that schemes meant for the various categories of people are brought at their doorsteps. Up to 31st March 2010 more than 30 publication of Gram Jyoti distributed between munch members.

The Manch (Forum) conducts regular monthly meetings during which the progress of applications submitted various grievances that need redressal and official apathy to these, if any, are discussed at length. Other issues discussed in these meetings include:

- complaints - collective and individual
- dissemination of latest information for updating the members
- preparing the members to ask relevant and pertinent questions in forthcoming gram sabhas
- seeking reports of ongoing welfare works under different govt. and NGO schemes in their villages
- corruption cases to be taken for settlement and refund
- discussion on course of action for the next two months

Case study

On 8th January, 2010 a lady from village Kakda delivered a baby at govt. Primary health centre Himatsar. The nurse who attended the delivery asked for Rs1100 as bribe (read goodwill). The relatives accompanying the lady could manage only Rs500 and paid it to the nurse. Back home the uncle of the lady, Ramratan, came to know about it. He phoned the **UJS** Secretary Mr. Chetanram and detailed him about the bribe episode who in turn talked with the doctor of the PHC. The doctor, after some minutes called back and got the nurse on the telephone line. She pleaded guilty and promised to pay the money back. Next morning Ramratan went to the PHC and received Rs 500 from the Nurse who was highly apologetic and begged of him not to make it public. In addition, Ramratan also received a cheque of Rs1700 under JSY provided by the central govt for new-births under NRHM.

Jhopri

The *Jhopri* (Panchayat Ghar) is a unique institution and another innovation of the UJS. This is a forum for the amicable settlement and resolution of conflicts like farm boundary disputes, atrocities on women by in-laws etc. Issues are resolved by members of the society itself, of course in the light of the law of the land. There is an unwritten binding obligation to abide by it which is absent in any resolution mediated by the police and public authorities. It has high social acceptance.

The name **JNM** sends shivers down the spine of corrupt officers. I have witnessed a lot changing (towards better) here owing to the efforts of this campaign
(Chunulal Braror, Advocate, Nokha)

RTI in Action, data since 2005 to 10

- 593 applications under RTI received
- 322 applications returned with proper replies and information
- 117 applications put through first appeal
- 91 applications put up for second appeal
- 81 applications had mutual settlements
- 11 Complaint to Information commissioner Jaipur.

The awareness generated by JNM has resulted in receiving more applications for various schemes by our department. Statistics say that 60% of the welfare budget of District Bikaner has been attracted by Nokha tehsil only, thanks to the efforts of JNM.

Sant Kumar, Superentendent

"I am witnessing a lot of people visiting the soochna Kendra regularly. Some times, it becomes a crowd so large that they encroach upon my space even. But i am ok with that because i believe the Kendra is working for the rights of the poor people"-- Mumtaz (an Ironsmith working adjacent to the soochna Kendra)

Formation of SHGs: This activity has been undertaken by the **JNM** to address women's empowerment among the most disadvantaged class in our community. The objective is to enable the women of the villages to earn a decent livelihood through the formation of SHGs (Self help groups), link them with financial institutions so that they take active role in society especially in uplifting their social and economic condition and encourage savings. Today there are over 100 such SHGs with over 1000 women members who have begun their work and have availed loans and subsidies from the government to set up small enterprises such as handicrafts, animal husbandry and also kitchen farming. Other than this, these SHGs are also used by UJS as a platform to enter the community for other activities and programs that need people's participation and support.

No of SHGs	Number of members	BPL SHGs	APL SHGs	Subsidies availed	Loans from banks
40	440	36	4	28-30 lacks	70-75 lacks

Measurable achievements up to 31st March 2010

Name of scheme	No. of beneficiaries	Benefit availed in Rs.
kisan jivan kalyan yojna for death during farmwork	15	440000
Pannadhay Jeewan Amrit yojna on death of BPL person	32	5495000
Pension scheme for widows, handicaps and aged	1300	7800000/year
Kanyadan yojna for assistance to widows for daughter's marriage	42	380000
Assistance to BPL families on marriage	253	1369000
scheme for orphans	34	303000/year
SC/ST relief scheme	45	948870
Sukhad Jeewan Yojna for marriage assistance to handicaps	13	245000
Total		16980870
Refunding of bribe money		2695500
Grand total		19676370

Statistic of applications by various social categories of the population

Year	SC		OBC		General		Collective	Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F		
2005-09	2935	912	1947	562	1320	363	824	8863
2010	440	264	519	179	118	43	138	1701
Total	3375	1176	2466	741	1438	406	962	10564

Jan Sunvais or Public Hearings:

The Manch also conducts **jan sunvais** or public hearings at the panchayat level to discuss work and budget of panchayats, expenditure by the panchayats, Public Distribution System, the efficacy of scheme implementation etc. These are attended by officials and panchayat representatives. Grievances on schemes and also on functioning of anganwadis are taken up. These Jan Sunvias are conducted about once a year.

The latest one was conducted at village Roda in **June 2008**, on behest of the villagers. The hearing concerned the operations of Anganwadi centres in their village. Around 250 women, children and men participated in the hearing. It came to light that there were names of villagers in the records who were supposedly benefiting from the centres when

they had actually not received any benefits through it. There were names of 20 children in the records who were supposedly getting education and meals in the anganwadis when actually they were attending government schools. It was also exposed that all the SHGs set up by these centres were on papers only and did not exist in real. The workers of the Anganwadi centres accepted their mistakes and begged forgiveness and took a pledge that these would not be repeated.

Our JNM members support in Sadhuna Gram Panchayat Jansunvai which is organized by Social Audit Department Govt. Of Rajasthan during the period of 1st Oct 2009 to 12th Oct. 2009. All Sarpanch were appose this Jansunvai and at last stage this was postpone by Government of Rajasthan.

Our decade-long tireless, fearless and non-violent struggle against corruption has won us nation-wide recognition and encouragement. **UJS' secretary, Chetanram**, has been bestowed with awards like **Manjunath Shannugam** integrity award, 2007 and **Bhoruka Charitable Trust** award, 2006.

Other activities

Despite pursuing our goals in our major areas of work, we are not unmindful of other problems confronting our society. The below mentioned text-box is a brief account of our miscellaneous activities since our inception.

- ▶ About 25000 saplings of fruit trees and shade-giving trees, with a survival rate of 50%, planted at different rural settlements.
- ▶ Solar lights provided to 193 rural households
- ▶ Hybrid seed kits, agricultural equipments provided to 300 farmers, 200 farmers supported with vegetable seeds for kitchen gardens and about 140 provided with seed storage iron drums.
- ▶ 344 households provided help to construct under ground drinking-water storage tanks and 25 public water storage tanks constructed.
- ▶ 60 residential huts built under the habitat and sanitation program of Dept.of science and technology Govt .of India and Millennium Trust.
- ▶ Under UBR Program, 100% birth registration achieved in Nokha and Dungargarh blocks of District Bikaner.
- ▶ Running 30 community-based rural libraries, about 1200 books each, in coordination with the govt. schools and individual volunteers, benefiting more than 6000 children.
- ▶ Formation of 100 SHGs, 90% of them women to enhance the capacity building at grassroots level.
- ▶ We. (Our organization and Jagruk Nagrik Munch) are also recognized for Mahtma Gandhee NREGA and other government employment work advocacy work.
- ▶ Now some of our workers are also recognized as legal adviser for poor peoples mainly for women and backward classes.

Highlights

Girls' Education:

- ▶ 2346 girls passed out from our Balika Shivar from class 5th to 6th.
- ▶ In 2010 girls (More than 80%) benefited belong to underprivileged castes and classes.
- ▶ 532 girls passed their class 8th board exams after being coached at the Balika shivirs
- ▶ 41 girls matriculated after attending our class 10th coaching program.
- ▶ 547 girls were equipped with vocational training skills like knitting, sewing, embroidery work etc.
- ▶ No incidence of girls leaving the camp studies before the completion of the course duration

Gram Saheli

The **Gram Sahelis**, published quarterly in which girls of the Ballika Manch contribute articles and expressions. This further provides an outlet for the educated girls to get their voices heard as well as allow them a hand at creativity and exercise their opinions and feelings, so long subdued.

Total 38 publications are distributed up to 31st March 2010.

Balika Samagam

In the **Ballika samagam** girls celebrated with full zeal and excitement the joys of being literate, well-informed and self-confident. This activity gives them a chance to express their happiness and have a lot of fun.

Nine of the girls who have passed out of these camps are in the radio production being implemented by PANOS Institute, South Asia working as anchors / editors and reporters; two girls from the shivirs have been employed in Sehaj Shiksha Kendra; seven girls have been employed as Anganwadi workers while another 7 of the girls are today providing vocational training to other girls of the residential educational camps. Three girls have functioned as supervisors in the government's Drought Relief interventions and one is running a grocery shop.

Needless to mention, these girls are looked upon by the members of the communities as role models and are held in high esteem.

Jyoti Eye Hospital

- ▶ 22870 were restored with **the right to sight** by the surgical treatment at **JEH**.
- ▶ 131701 have been given eye care consultation at our hospital OPD.
- ▶ 126 outreach diagnostic camps were conducted in different villages
- ▶ 15800 people, which include 214 children, have been screened during our outreach camps.
- ▶ 1073 people were referred for the in-hospital treatment after initial screening in the camps
- ▶ More than 3000 people were provided with spectacles for different refractive errors.

- ▶ 4800 people were given consultation at our vision centers, out of which 480 cases were referred to **JEH** for further treatment.
- ▶ 100% success rate of surgical treatment at **JEH**. No significant complaints received so far.
- ▶ According to District authority reports, around 7500 eye surgeries have been conducted in district Bikaner from all institutions, government as well as private, during the financial year 2009/10, **Out of that as many as 3973 (53%) were done by Jyoti Eye Hospital, Nokha only.**
- ▶ A comparative data of eye surgeries conducted by the Government District Hospital Bikaner, with 15 Surgeons on staff and Jyoti eye Hospital for the current financial year.

Month	No. of surgeries conducted by Govt. district Hospital, Bikaner	No. of surgeries conducted by Jyoti eye hospital, Nokha ,Bikaner
April,09	205	423
May ,09	169	284
June,09	206	220
July,09	165	266
August,09	153	314
Septembe,09	151	333
October,09	197	313
November,09	175	425
December,09	250	363
Januury,2010	101	192
February 2010	195	301
March 2010	268	539
Total	2070	3973

Jagruk Nagrik Manch

- ▶ Out of a total of 700 members of **JNM**, 570 (81%) belong to the SC/OBC castes
- ▶ 149 members among our aware citizens' forum are **women**.
- ▶ 8821 applications seeking information and redressal received so far, 75% were from SC/OBC castes
- ▶ Rs. 2695500 taken as bribe by govt officials was returned to the people who had been made to pay it.
- ▶ A little over Rs. 16980870 under various govt. welfare schemes reached to the public through our efforts.

..And we pledge to work tirelessly and fearlessly towards realizing our vision.

How we spend:

The magnitude of the problems facing our society is so huge and so complex, yet the resources with us to fight them are so limited. Therefore it becomes imperative to make a very judicious and optimum use of the public funds we receive. We try our best to make sure that every penny is spent towards the purpose it is received and meant for.

Our [audited income/expenditure and balance sheets](#) for the FY 2009-10 are annexed for your view.

