

JAN CHETNA MANCH, BOKARO

Newsletter No. 7

January 2019

Greetings again from Jan Chetna Manch (Forum for Peoples' Awareness) Bokaro (JCMB)

We are based in the Chandankiari block of the Bokaro district of Jharkhand, India. The area continues to be plagued by the problems of poverty, gender inequality, malnutrition, inadequate and inaccessible healthcare, poor quality education and corruption. JCMB and its hardworking team continue to work for the betterment of the people of the area in the field of health and nutrition, women's empowerment and better governance. Today, through its various activities, JCMB serves a population of over a 100,000 rural and needy people.

Over the last 6 months JCMB has been involved in many activities. We bring some of these together for you to see in this newsletter.

Jan Chetna Manch, Bokaro – for the people by the people

JCMB has tried to establish itself as an organisation that not only works for the poor and marginalised, but is run and managed by local people too. Almost all the board members are locals, and most of them belong to the communities that are most in need of help.



JCMB board meeting underway

Board members from left to right: Paresh Mandal, Satyaban Bose, Tanmoy Mahto, Tapas Chatterjee, Ranjan Ghosh, Sadhu Charan Mahato, Ajit Kumar Mahato (Treasurer), Bipin Mahato (Secretary), Pancham Prasad, Shivani Mahto, Asha Hembrom (President).

Women's health – both in the Women's Health Centre and at the community level continues to be a major activity of JCMB. During the last 6 months we have reached out for much needed help in improving our facilities in the centre. We bring you the results of our efforts, and your contributions in the narratives below.

Improvements in neonatal care in the health centre



All the newborn babies are monitored soon after birth for signs of distress, which includes checking the oxygen intake of the baby. For this a pulse oxymeter is needed. The normal size of a finger pulse oxymeter is usually adequate for a full term, healthy baby, but is too big for the small, preterm or low birth weight babies. With the help of family and friends we now have a special pulse oxymeter for these wee babes.

The health centre already had one phototherapy unit for the treatment of neonatal jaundice, which is not uncommon amongst newborns. Often two babies need to be treated, which obviously poses problems. Now, with the help of donations from the friends and well wishers, we have bought a new phototherapy machine, which is also much more efficient than the older one.



Another much needed improvement, which was made possible by individual donations, was another baby warmer for small neonates. The one we already have is old, and the temperature cannot be adjusted. It is only useful for keeping clothes warm for the newborn, and for the first few minutes after birth. In most cases this is enough, since the babies are soon put with mum in the ward. However for a few babies, who cannot be put with mums for a variety of reasons, need long term stay in the warmer. This is now possible with the new machine.

Once again we are indebted to Sandhya Srinivasan and her friends for the knitting of wee booties, caps and cardigans for our small and preterm babies – for whom there are no suitable clothes available in the local market. Or at least not in Chandankiari! Due to these warm clothes our small babies get through the cold winter months snug and warm – and looking great too.



All dressed up ready to go home!



A new consignment of woolies for the preemies

Other improvements in the health centre



New patient monitor in operation theatre



New fetal Doppler for the labour room



New semi auto analyser for the laboratory

Although JCMB's health care is heavily dependent on local people – as recipients of care as well as providers – a little help from outside is always welcome. Poor people should not get poor quality health care. The operation theatre has been improved with the addition of another patient monitor, allowing us to utilize the existing ones for post op care in the ward. Monitoring of the fetal heart rate is a basic requirement during labour, as well as during prenatal care. The use of fetal dopplers is an essential piece of equipment, but it is also reassuring for mum who can also hear the heartbeat. We are always in need of more of these – if anyone is seeing this, donations are welcome, even used and old ones!! And in the lab – our overworked team have been requesting us for a semi auto analyser for years. Happily we managed to get one for them this year, with the help of individual donations.

And finally.....Donation of hospital equipment



At long last JCMB got the delivery of a huge amount of valuable hospital equipment and furniture donated by Dr Sanjoy Sen of Kolkota. At present most of the equipment is being housed in the new building in Koromtanr, ready for being installed once the wards and operation theatre there are completed. A few items are being already used – like steel drums. All of the materials are solid and robust, unlike the things which we now find.



New support for mental health patients: SAVE-UK



Dr Dipankar Datta (2nd right) interacts with the doctors from CIP, Ranchi at JCMB

JCMB was fortunate to receive the support of South Asia Voluntary Enterprise (SAVE-UK) this year. Due to the enthusiasm of Dr Dipankar Datta, who helped us formulate, and get the support of, a programme to help poor mental health patients.

JCMB has an ongoing mental health programme, with the support of the Central Institute of Psychiatry, Ranchi. However, there had been a noticeable drop out amongst the really poor patients. Most mental health problems necessitate long term treatment, which is not always possible for poor families. The timely grant from SAVE-UK has solved this problem. Now over 30 patients are getting either free or heavily subsidized care and their treatment is now regular.

A little help making a big difference to people's lives

Promode Dey is a patient suffering from epilepsy. He is a poor villager, living with his widowed mother, wife and younger brother. Whilst taking medication a few years ago he improved greatly and started to work in a sweet shop. Then the subsidized treatment stopped – and so did Promode's medication. Somehow the family could buy food with the earnings of his wife, who works in other people's houses in the village. With the free medicines provided by the SAVE-UK project, he has started to take medicines again, and he has started to work again.

Bhanu Devi is another epilepsy patient. She used to suffer from continuous shaking of her head. Due to this she lost her job in the school where she used to help cook the midday meals. Her medicines cost 500 Rupees per month, which is a significant amount of her earnings. After getting subsidized treatment from JCMB, from the SAVE-UK project she has stopped shaking her head and has started working in the school again.

Names of the above cases have been changed, nor are photographs available due to patient confidentiality



Mental health clinic underway at JCMB

JCMB's mental health programme is a partnership in the true sense of the word. JCMB provides the logistics, space, & its community health workers undertake the follow up and help in the clinic; the Central Institute of Psychiatry provide the expertise and treatment; and now SAVE-UK provides a much needed subsidy for the care of the poor and needy. Over a hundred patients each month are receiving care from JCMB for mental health problems.

As in previous newsletters we provide some data about the number of beneficiaries in the table below

At a glance: Health activities in the Women's Health Centre

Consultations in WHC and Outreach Clinics	Numbers July to December 2018
Antenatal Check Ups	3348
Gynaecological problems	498
Infertility	77
Children	227
Immunisation	865
Acupuncture	514
Mental health	496
Other	192
Total	6217
Tests and investigations	
Ultrasonography	646
Laboratory investigations:	
• Number of test:	11445
• Number of patients:	4518
Number of women admitted in the WHC	
Normal deliveries	531
Cesarean section deliveries	24
Other surgery (Sterilisation / hysterectomy)	18
Treatment for severe anaemia	16
Preterm/small babies	18
Other illnesses	238
Total	845

Completing the Operation Theatre in Koromtandr



Finalising the design of the operation theatre in Koromtandr with Drs Jyothi & Ashok (& Mary who is not in the pic!). Not only visiting doctors conduct surgeries, train our team of health workers, but they also advise us on our future plans.



And the roof finally goes on the OT complex in November. By December the ramp from the ground floor to the 1st floor is also underway, thanks to the timely inputs of Drs Jyotsna and Jayanta Basu.

Timely intervention by Community Health Worker saves the life of mum and baby!



Usha with her newborn baby

Usha Devi was pregnant for the first time, after being married for 6 years – a long time in this area. In spite of the much-wanted pregnancy, she did not come regularly for pre natal checkups. Her mother-in-law felt that they were unnecessary, & a waste of time and money. Her husband disagreed, but did not openly disobey his mother. By the last month of pregnancy Usha was anaemic and hypertensive: both dangerous conditions. The Community Health Worker who had been assigned to her village failed to convince her family to take her for treatment. So another of JCMB's CHWs, Menoka, was sent again, since her village was nearer. She went on her day off, and finally convinced the husband, and without further delay, brought them both to JCMB's health centre. She was treated for both hypertension and anaemia. After some days she had a trouble-free delivery and produced a healthy baby too. Without Menoka's intervention the story could have been much different!

A Tribute to Neil May: Loss of a great friend of JCMB



Neil during his last visit to Koromtanr building in 2016

It is with great sadness that we have lost a great friend of JCMB, Neil May in November. After a brief illness he underwent a major, risky heart operation, from which he did not recover.

Over the years Neil has been a significant fund raiser for JCMB, through his church at Cadmore End in England. But more importantly he has been a mentor, supporter, advisor and friend – for the organisation, for our construction work, and for our team.

In spite of his extremely busy life, and all his other commitments, he never failed to extend a helping hand whenever it was needed. He did not merely give advice in words, but came and actually sat with our builders to teach how to combine old and new techniques of lime rendering. He also gave freely of his time to help prepare a vision document for our organisation.

All of our team at JCMB has fond memories of him, and he will be sorely missed by us all.

DO CONTACT US

Get in touch via email (janchetnamanch@rediffmail.com) or phone (+919431128882 & +918084791472)

It's better to send an email though, since the phones do not work too well here!

Details of ways to donate to help us are available on our website <www.janchetnamanch.org>

A BIG THANKS!

Thanks to all our friends and well wishers in supporting our endeavors. This includes: The Jamsetji Tata Trust; SAVE-UK; the Central Institute of Psychiatry, Ranchi; the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Jharkhand.

The following friends, well wishers and supporters have helped JCMB in many ways in the last 6 months, we thank them all again. Without such support our activities here in Bokaro would be difficult to continue.

Drs. Jyothi Unni, Ashok Schroff, Mary Schroff, Jayanta Basu and Jyotsna Basu. Dr Sanjoy Sen, Dr Dipankar Datta, Dr Jayeshree & Kaushalya Gajraj, Sandhya Srinivasan and friends; Bev & Paul Nelmes; Graham Nelmes; Stuart & Sylvia Nelmes; Louise & Tony Borg; Friends of Louise at IBM, Chris and Sara Borg; Joe Shannon; Howard Badger; Allan Mortel; Elizabeth Macrae; Suvi Choudhuri; Aileen Christie; Donna & Paul Pearce; Anne & David Gledhill, Roslyn Begnall & John Perrin.