

JAN CHETNA MANCH, BOKARO



Newsletter No. 6

June 2018

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

We are based in the small village of Chamrabad in Jharkhand, India. The area continues to be plagued by the problems of poverty, gender inequality, malnutrition, inadequate and inaccessible healthcare, illiteracy and corruption. JCM and its hardworking team continue to work for the betterment of the people of the area in the field of health and nutrition, empowerment, governance, environment etc. Today, through its various activities, JCM serves a population of over a 100,000 rural and needy people.

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

Organising Women for Empowerment

JCM's team has been involved in the establishment of over 500 women's self help groups, in over a hundred villages in the Chas and Chandankiari blocks of the Bokaro district. These groups are the stepping stone to the community, and many activities other than savings and credit are taken up, such as domestic violence and corruption.

Each year JCM helps organise an annual meeting – a 'samellan' – of all the members. More than four thousand women gather for this event. This year stalls to promote healthy food for children were also set up.



Members gather for the annual meeting



Health food stall at the annual meeting



Sarala Devi attends her food stall

Mental health: Still a service much needed

Although the mental health project which was supported by the Tata Trusts ended nearly two years ago the programme still continues, as does the continuing demand for services. A team of mental health professionals from the Central Institute of Psychiatry continue to visit the Women's Health Centre each month. Nearly a hundred patients come on that day with a variety of mental health problems. The Community Health Workers and the 'Swasthya Sakhis' (village health guides) also help in follow up of patients during their field visits in the villages.

This year, as in previous years, JCM set up a stall in the most popular annual fair in Chandankiari, the 'Dhara Mela' in January. Thousands frequent the fair, and much interest was shown, as always, in the posters and leaflets in our mental health stall, especially by young men.



Young men throng the mental health stall



Dr Vidya of CIP with patient in the health centre

Childhood Malnutrition: More than poverty

During the course of our programme to prevent and treat malnutrition among children aged 6 to 36 months, JCM undertook a survey of the eating practices of children in the villages. It was found that villagers though poor, spent money on easily available, unhealthy snacks rather than healthier options. We have now focused more on changing eating practices rather than merely getting children to eat. During several meetings we organized for mothers and their children, we found that simple, cheap and healthy food like kicheri and eggs were hugely popular.



Chips and cold drinks everywhere



Children enjoy kicheri and eggs

A well time birth: For mother and baby!



Operation almost over



Sonamoni and daughter now

Drs Jyothi, Ashok and Mary arrived late afternoon in January after tiring journeys from Pune and Seattle. Meanwhile in the health centre Sonamoni had been admitted for the last 2 days with mild contractions, was tired too. She had been married for more than ten years, and this was her first pregnancy. Her husband is a migrant labourer, working in Bangalore for most of the year, but with little savings to show for it. She had not had an easy pregnancy, faced many complications, and the baby was not eager to be born. Jyothi examined her at 8 pm and decided we should wait and see, though things did not look favourable for a normal delivery. At midnight Lindsay went over to the health centre, hoping for some sort of progress. Pains had greatly increased, but no progress at all. Sonamoni's mother pleaded for us to 'do something' to relieve her daughter of the pain. At 1am we called Jyothi and Ashok, by 2 am the baby was born by caesarean section. This was a most lucky and well timed birth for Sonamoni – had she been referred anywhere else in Bokaro at that time of day, (or rather night) she would have had a much more uncomfortable experience, and at considerable expense. A big thanks to Jyothi and Ashok who happily did the needful – even in the middle of the night.

Activities in the Women's Health Centre: January to June 2018

Consultations in WHC and Outreach Clinics	Numbers
Antenatal Check Ups	3362
Gynaecological problems	843
Infertility	133
Children	266
Immunisation	773
Acupuncture	388
Mental health	493
Other	95
Total	6353
Test and investigations	
Ultrasonography	674
Laboratory investigations:	
• Number of test:	11378
• Number of patients:	4382
Number of women admitted in the WHC	
Normal deliveries	461
Cesarean section deliveries	27
Surgery (Sterilisation/hysterectomy)	105
Treatment for severe anaemia	32
Preterm/small babies	21
Other illnesses	262
Total	908

Neonatal Care: Caring for the babies – and their mothers

Most of the preterm babies born in JCM's health centre stay for more than 2 weeks, some staying for over a month. We always admit the mums with their babies. If the babies are too small to feed or too sick, they are referred to a higher centre. One of the main problems we faced – apart from money – was boredom and depression amongst the mothers. Used to working from pre-dawn to post-dusk, these village women never had an opportunity to rest, ever. Now with only one – or sometimes two – babies to care for, these women had little to do! They are not used to reading (few are even literate); or other activities such as sewing or knitting. With a generous donation from Ravi Srinivasan we bought a screen and now show a movie every evening. The nursing team also had to be trained to detect and deal with post partum depression among the mothers.



Watching films whilst baby sleeps



Under watchful eye of nursing team

JCM's smallest baby



Going home after 6 weeks in WHC



.. and after one month at home

Soniya Devi is the longest stay ever in the baby room. She gave birth to twins whilst she was just 30 weeks pregnant. The first twin was a only 1.2 kg, but the second one was only 900 gms. We advised the family to take them both to a 'higher centre'. We also knew that this would mean considerable cost: two babies in an intensive neonatal care unit in Bokaro for a month would cost more than Soniya's husband could hope to earn in two years! Soniya was worried for her babies' survival and also her husband, who started drinking heavily in her absence. With help from our community health workers and nursing team, Soniya's husband's drinking got under control, and the babies thrived!

Blood donation camp at JCM

Getting people to donate blood here is a huge problem. Villagers are often unwilling to give blood even for their own family members. Men often plead that they are unable – or unwilling – to give blood on the grounds that they have to do manual work, or they are too weak. Poor villagers are often ready to ‘buy’ blood (from a donor who is not from their own immediate family) at considerable expense rather than donate themselves. JCM has long felt that this taboo needs to be broken. With some of our well wishers pressuring us, we decided to organise a blood donation camp, with the support of the Red Cross Society. We were not expecting much local participation, and warned the Red Cross Society not to expect more than twenty. They assured us that even if five people came, it would be worth it to break the taboo in the villages. We were more than surprised that many turned up willing to give blood, and thirty people actually donated. Many of JCM’s staff volunteered to donate, though they were not pressurised to do so. Unfortunately almost all of the female staff were rejected on either grounds of low weight (less than 45 kgs) or low haemoglobin (less than 12).



Paru Devi, a ‘swasthya sakhi’ of Madra donating blood



The ‘hoshiyar’ (‘smart and clever’) women that donated blood

The new building in Koromtandr

The new health centre building is slowly – sometimes very slowly – growing. The second floor has been built and the doors and windows are being put in. After inputs from Drs. Jyothi, Jayanta and Jyotsna we have redesigned the future operation theatre, and relocated the ramp from the side of the dining room, to inside the courtyard. The second floor of the centre will house the labour room, baby room, operation theatre, staff-cum-store room, and two wards for indoor patients. Now fittings for all these are underway.



Second floor complete



6 bedded new baby room of the future

Recognition for all the hard work



It's always good for our hardworking team to get some appreciation and recognition, beyond the boundaries of Bokaro. In March JCM received the "Express Public Health Award 2018" for Best Performing NGO in Public Health. Here the team proudly holds up their trophy.

A website for Jan Chetna Manch, Bokaro

JCM has a website that is still a work in progress. Do have a look and give us your feedback and suggestions.....

janchetnamanch.org

CONTACT US

We'd love to hear from you! Get in touch with us via email (janchetnamanch@rediffmail.com) or phone (+919431128882 & +919431128221).

We're always on the lookout for motivated, good hearted people to help us! We need all sorts of people to help us in the various activities we are involved with. In cash, kind or spirit!

Ways to help, or donation details are available on our website.

Please get in touch via email – the phones here rarely work!

A BIG THANKS!

Thanks to all our friends and well wishers in supporting our endeavors. This includes: The Jamsetji Tata Trust; the Central Institute of Psychiatry, Ranchi; the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Jharkhand; Drs. Jyothi Unni, Ashok Shroff, Mary Shroff, Jayanta Basu and Jyotsna Basu.

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

Ravi Srinivasan, Sharmishtha Gupta, Jyothi Unni, Shushila Rao, Atul Sharma, Sudip Basu, Rajat Boobna, Pranay Boobna, R. P. Boobna, Neha Sheth, Vibhore Trading & Finance, Jupiter Plaza Pvt. Ltd., Shyam Narayan Bhalotia, Bandana Kakarania, Amit Kakarania, Jyotsna Basu, Sushmita Basu, Neelam Lal, Ranjan Nandi, Jayanta Basu, Ranu Singh, Amita Kamat, Dhananjay Ravat, Kiran Grover, Aparna Sabherwal.

