

# Jan Chetna Manch Bokaro



**Annual Report 2008 - 2009**

**Chamrabad, Chandra, Chandankiari, Bokaro, Jharkhand,  
828134**

**Registered under Societies Registration Act, 21/1860  
Registration No.918, 2006-07, Jharkhand.**

## *Jan Chetna Manch, Bokaro* *Forum for People's Awareness*

**Jan Chetna Manch Bokaro** seeks to empower and improve the lives of the weakest and poorest in the villages of Bokaro district. In particular we aim to improve the overall health and well being of poor rural women and their families. Problems of poverty, livelihoods, gender discrimination and inadequate health care facilities need to be addressed through a multi pronged strategy of empowerment, organization, training, and awareness generation.

The demands for expanding the activities of JCMB from the community continue to increase. Requests have come from far flung villages of Chandankiari and Chas, which had been neglected by developmental activities. Villagers have requested JCMB to implement health, micro credit and livelihood activities. JCMB has tried to respond to this demand.

New activities have been initiated this year, which have considerably improved and enhanced JCMB's existing agenda. Sanitation and herbal medicinal plant promotion, for example, is a natural extension of our involvement in health issues. The promotion of new methods of farming has also been introduced this year – organic farming, SRI cultivation and growing of herbal medicinal plants on a commercial basis have all been initiated.

The expansion of the Women's Health Centre this year has considerably improved access to health care for poor women in the area, helped by the outreach programmes and training of village women as health workers.

In our endeavour we have received the support of the following organisations: Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, WaterAid (India), Niwano Foundation, Tzedakah Trust, International Women's Health Coalition, Department of Health and Family Welfare (Jharkhand Government), Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, NABARD, Population Services International and Insieme Onslus. We thank all of them for their support.

**Satyaban Bose**

Secretary  
June, 2009

## Activities Undertaken 2008 - 09

### Women's Self Help Groups: 'Mahila Mandal Samiti'

The 'Mahila Mandal Samiti', the federation of the women's SHGs set up by JCMB, was constituted several years ago. This year the federation was registered as a cooperative society under Jharkhand Mutually Aided Cooperative Society Act, 1979. As a result the name of the federation has been changed and the MMS has become the 'Chetna SHG Mahila Swabalambi Sahakari Samiti Ltd'. The official registration number was received only in the month of Jan 2009.

The progress of the 'mahila mandals' continued unabated even though due to the activities of another NGO formed some of the ex-activists of JCMB some groups have dissociated from our organization. However the strength of the federation was largely unaffected, as witnessed by the participation of more than 5000 women in the Annual General Meeting or the 'Sammelan' as it is known, which was held on 8<sup>th</sup> March - International Women's Day.

### The Women's Health Centre



*Women's Health Centre*

The Women's Health Centre, located in Chamrabad, was improved and expanded substantially this year with a grant from the 'Sir Dorabji Tata Trust'. The health centre now has space for a double bedded delivery room, 7 bedded ward for indoor patients, an operation theatre, neonatal care room, and a laboratory.

In the last year the number of deliveries has increased from 187 to 223, and continues to grow. Nearly 600 women registered for antenatal care, 170 for infertility advice and treatment. JCMB received a donation from the 'Tzedakah Trust' in Mysore to help women access emergency obstetric care and for neonatal care in a tertiary level hospital, which are beyond the reach of poor villagers.



*Mother and baby after cesarean section*



‘Janani Suraksha Yojana’ coupons

The ‘Women’s Health Centre’ has also been accredited as a health institution for institutional delivery. JCMB was provided with coupons and funds by the Department of Health and Family Welfare of the Jharkhand government, so that women who deliver in the centre can be given the financial incentive under the ‘Mukhya Mantri Janani Shishu Swasthya Abhiyan’ (‘Janani Suraksha Yojana’).

## **Herbal Medicine Production and Promotion of New Methods of Farming**

A new project funded by ‘Niwano Peace Foundation’ of Japan was started from April 2008. The main objective is to promote livelihood for poor farmers by encouraging cultivation of medicinal plants, preparation and propagation of herbal medicines and utilization of barren lands by water conservation programs.

We have set up two model demonstration farms in two villages – Chamrabad and Simulia. The farms are situated on two barren plots of land measuring 5 acres approximately. Medicinal plants like ‘satawar’, ‘aswagandha’, and ‘giloi’ have been planted in Chamrabad farm. The plot in Simulia was even tougher to cultivate. It was a stony upland with very little top soil left. We planted saplings of big trees such as ‘amla’, ‘neem’ and ‘sisham’ as well as plants like ‘grit kumari’ (aloe vera) which can grow with little water



Aloe Vera cultivation – Simulia

Several exposure visits and training camps on cultivation and marketing of medicinal plants were organised. Seminars and workshops in JCMB’s office were held on subjects such as medicinal plant cultivation, herbal medicines, organic farming, and System of Rice Intensification. We have been helped by experts such as G S Jarial, Dr S. Agarwal, Parmeshwar Giri and Dr P.P Hembrom.



Herbal medicine production centre

A small group of women have been engaged in the production of herbal medicines. This year this group was reorganized and trained to produce herbal medicines on a larger scale. Popular items include massage oil, 'triphala churan', and 'davai phul churan'. These women also produce 'chana ka sattu', which is consumed mostly by the many women who access antenatal care in the Women's Health Centre.

## Training village health guides – 'swasthya sakhis'



Training programme in progress

JCMB continues to train village women as primary health care providers. There are now 45 such health guides, known as 'swasthya sakhis'. Monthly workshops have been held for these 'swasthya sakhis', and topics have included: herbal medicines for women's illnesses (with Dr P. P. Hembrom); neonatal care (Dr. Chandreya Bannerjee); body literacy, gynecological problems, and abdominal examination (Dr. Mira Sadgopal)

## Advocacy and research

Given the poor status of women's health, particularly maternal health, JCMB has continued to lobby for better care for women during pregnancy and childbirth. Advocacy for improving maternal health needed to be multi pronged: with all levels of care providers ('dais', village 'doctors', and qualified doctors) and the community. We organized meetings with providers, conducted drama programmes in the villages and produced a CD with songs, in order to

highlight the need to improve maternal health care.



Leaflets on maternal health



*Traditional birth attendants*

Also in line with our emphasis on, and concern for maternal health, we have hosted a pilot study on indigenous childbirth practices known as the 'Jeeva Project'. This involved extensive interviews with traditional birth attendants – 'dais'. This research was supported by the Insieme Onslus (Italy)

## Water and sanitation

With the help of WaterAid (India) JCMB launched a water and sanitation programme this year. This year we conducted a thorough base line survey on the water and sanitation situation in the villages of Chas and Chandakiari. The situation is pathetic. In spite of the activities of the government's Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC), not even one per cent of the house holds in the villages have latrines. The latrines built with assistance from the government are not being used.

JCMB conducted a campaign for safe drinking water and sanitation through posters, meetings and drama. We

utilized the network of women's SHGs to spread the message on water and sanitation. The illnesses that are caused by non-potable drinking water, dirty bathing water, unsanitary conditions were highlighted.



*Wall map with village water facilities*

## Library for 'Mahila Mandal' Members



*Mahila Mandal Library*

The library for 'Mahila Mandal' members is a small but on going project, supported by the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation. The library contains books and pictures for newly literate people. It also has a large collection of materials on women and child health, medicinal plants and organic farming. Our staff and health workers are also using it a resource centre.

