



ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE

JAN SHIKSHA BHAVAN

GAUNAHA

WHO WE ARE:

Jan Shiksha Bhavan (JSB), Gaunaha is an extension center of **The Charitable Association for Rural Education and Development (READ)**, Bettiah. JSB is a nongovernment, non-profit organization, working for the empowerment, development and realization of the entitlements and rights of the socially excluded and marginalized people in the remote areas of Gaunaha Block in the West Champaran district of Bihar.

OUR VISION

To build an egalitarian and self-reliant society founded on human values by developing self-confidence and leadership among the underprivileged sections of our society so as to help them to organize themselves by breaking caste and gender discrimination, superstitious practices and communal bondage, through participatory political process and gaining equitable control over the means of productions.

OUR MISSION

To accompany the poor, to help themselves to solve the problems of economic poverty, exploitation, gender bias, etc. and access them to government and other welfare programmes through a process of sensitization and organization.

OUR VALUES

- Integrity
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Gender Equity
- Social Justice
- Solidarity with the Poor

OUR GOAL:

Empower and capacitate the poor to enable them to realize their human and constitutional rights.

OUR FOCUS:

- Educational Mainstreaming of the Deprived Sections through Strengthening of Primary Education System
- Empowerment of Women and Sustainable Livelihood
- Strengthening Panchayati Raj Institution by Promoting Participatory Self-Governance
- Capacity Building, Legal aid

WHO WE WORK WITH

We undertake interventions, projects that address the needs and rights of the poorest and the most excluded social groups with particular focus on women and children.

In our context this includes:

- **The socially marginalized:** whose basic rights and entitlements are being denied and unmet; who live under chronic poverty and livelihood insecurity, **like Dalits, Tribals, Minorities, Women, People with Disability, and Extreme Backward Castes.**
- People who have been victims of natural calamities, disasters etc.

BROAD STRATEGY



OUR APPROACH

Participatory:

JSB strongly believes in community participation in implementation of its programmes. The poor are not just the passive beneficiaries but they are the active participants who own up their responsibility to shape their own future.

Partnership and Networking

JSB is committed to meaningful and long term collaboration with local organizations, government agencies, networks and alliances. Our partnership is based on equality, transparency, accountability and mutual trust and respect.

Right Based Perspective:

It is our firm conviction that poverty must be viewed in the larger context of social exclusion and multiple deprivations. People should have equitable access to resources and services as well as rights and entitlements.

Advocacy:

Our advocacy efforts spring from our grass root interventions and not an isolated effort. We do not advocate on behalf of the poor, but with the poor and led by them. This is to ensure that advocacy and grass root experience have perfect correlation and in the process the poor are capacitated and enabled to fight for their rights and entitlements.

Issues of Social Justice:

Poverty and inequality have strong correlations. Poverty is the manifestation of the worst form of inequality ingrained in the structures of society. Therefore, the issues of social justice, social inclusion etc. is integral part of our work.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF JBS

The Genesis

The genesis and existence of JBS to be part of the struggles of the marginalized people of the area is directly associated with the option made by the Patna Jesuit Province in particular and the Society of Jesus in General. This attempt to be part of the poor in their lives and struggles has come to be known as social apostolate. Translating this option for the poor in the Indian Context, the Jesuits came to identify the Dalits, the Tribals, women, children and unorganized sector workers as the poor. Keeping this in mind, social action centres as well as social institutions were founded to address the issues of these segments of Indian Population to work

for structural change, structures that bound the marginalized communities to exclusion, exploitation.

1970's could be marked as a decade of awareness-liberation of the third world, especially of the oppressed. Champaran of the 1970s was infected with low level of grass root organization, illiteracy, discrimination and exploitation of women. The Jesuit Community of Champaran responded to the signs of the times and Rural Development Programme was established by Khrist Raja Educational Association (KREA) in KR premises, Bettiah. Since 1987 the Jesuits in social action moved from KR school into separate centre and The Charitable association for Rural Education and Development (READ) was born.

The founding of JBS was an outgrowth of this social and historical process. Thus there is an ideological and operational basis in the demands of the poor as well as the traditions of the Society of Jesus.

Jan Shiksha Bhavan (JSB), as a unit of READ, Bettiah has been operating in the entire Gaunaha block of West Champaran for the last 20 years. Joseph Srampickal, a pioneering Jesuit who had worked at READ, Bettiah set out on an exploration in 1991. He stayed in a place called Sitti and established 50 Non-Formal Education Centers (NFE centers), most of them among the Tharu Tribals in the outlying villages of the block. Starting with the NFE Centres, the organization has been making concerted effort in spreading awareness among the masses on the need for education. Several trainings were conducted conscientising the Tribals and Dalits against the exploitation of the feudal landlords and upper caste people. Women were organized into Self Help Groups (SHGs). Skill building for women of the area has been a major involvement. A cultural team (Nukkad Team) comprising of 8 members was always part of the Social Action involvement. In the initial stages the organization focused more on the tribal communities like Tharus and Oraons, but of late it has been focusing more on the Buiya-Musahar community through an innovative education programme which has centres in the villages as well as a short residential programme for a shorter duration on a small scale. Responding to the need for providing quality education to the poorest of the poor, especially girls, in a more concentrated manner, JSB initiated a school in the year 2005.

Journey down the years.....

Year	Historic Time-line/ Events
1991 May	Joe Srampi from READ was deputed with the responsibility of exploring new areas of social involvement for READ.
1991, October 10	Srampi came alone on a cycle to Sitti.

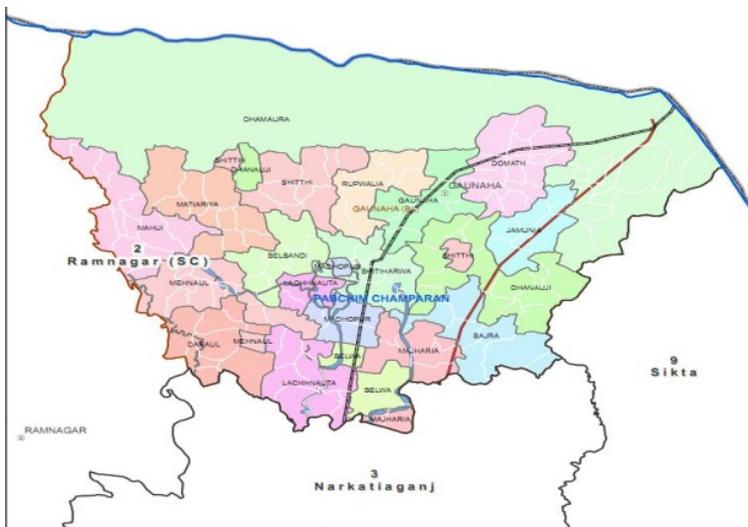
1991 October 25	Srampi returned to Sitti with the intention of starting 50 NFE centers in the area.
1991 Nov 25	6 day training for Animators. Fr.Meloo, Sr. Helen, a diocesan Scholastic - all joined Srampi in conducting the training.
1991 Dec 1	38 NFEs functioning (18 Tharus, 10 SCs, 9BC, 1 Muslim)
1992 Jan	Srampi got a small house in Sitti to stay and to keep materials (50 NFEs functioning). All supported by PJS.
1993 April	First Miserior Project for NFE
1994 Feb 14	Land bought at Rampurwa, Gaunaha by PJS
1995 May 14	Gaunaha building work began
1995 Jan 26	Srampi began to stay in the new house along with two others
1995	2 nd Miserior Project for NFE
1995 May	4 DMI sisters came from Bagaha.
1996 May	DMI sisters left
1996 Nov	A small piece of land bought a little away from JSB
1999	3 rd project of Miserior through IGSS-NEG (PJS supported the project for the interim period)
2000 Nov 22	Jan SikshaParishad registered as a Trust
2000	Prov. William D'Souza's visited Gaunaha and had given a proposal to open a school.
2000	Children started being registered through NIOS
2001	MANOS UNIDAS project
2002	The school started in a temporary setting.
2010	MANOS UNIDAS project
2010 Feb 20	Sumit appointed as the Asst. Director
2011 June 11	Siji's arrival at Gaunaha

2011	A piece of land registered in the name of READ supported by PJS
2011 June 14	Boundary wall work began for the outside property
2011 June 27	Saji's arrival at Gaunaha as the Headmaster of BSS
2011 Aug 10	Installation of Solar at Gaunaha
2011 Sep 4-5	DM Sridhar and SP Nishaant's visit to our area and Programme at XAVIERS
2011 Nov 12	Chief Minister Nitish Kumar in Rampurwa
2012 April	A new project signed with NEG-FIRE along with Ratanpurwa
2012 July 10	OLP Sisters joined the Community

STRATEGIES AND METHODOLOGIES ADOPTED BY JSB FOR VARIOUS PROGRAMMES

In terms of strategy, conscientisation was adopted by JSB for awareness creation, spread of literacy, education and development. Keeping in line with the trend of 1970s, JSB began with awareness creation, conscientisation and mobilization and organization of rural masses to understand the social structure that is operative, the forces and factors that work against their interest, the need to forge a unified effort to obtain their basic needs and gain their rights. Cultural revival and upholding of popular culture also was one of the strategies followed by JSB. Participation in local decision making and governance through panchayati Raj institution was also stressed by JSB. This was done in a special manner by initiating women for participation.

AN OVER VIEW OF GAUNAHA



Gaunaha is located about 272 km away from the state capital, Patna, in the north-west direction at the Indo-Nepal Border. The place is significant in the freedom struggle as Gandhiji, listening to the plight of the forced indigo cultivators, began his Satyagraha, the most popular form of struggle

in Indian Freedom Movement in 1919, staying at Bhitiharwa, a village in Gaunaha. The *kutir* (small hut) where Gandhiji stayed is maintained till date as an *Ashram* and many people do visit the place. In Rampurwa village of Gaunaha, there is an Ashoka pillar excavated and maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India. A well-known Indo-Nepal border Bhiknathori is just 12 kms away from Gaunaha Centre. Gaunaha has several rivers originating from Nepal and has a good forest cover through the borders.

Boundaries	N-Boarder of Nepal, S- Narkatiyagang,, E-Mainatad, W-Ramnagar
No of villages	168 (157Eroded 11)
Population	208056 Men (108122), Women (99933)
Panchayats	18
No of households	37158
Below Poverty Line (B.P.L) Households	30220
Above Poverty Line H.H	6938
Primary H. Centres	4
Higher Education Institutions	0
High Schools	4
Middle Schools	65
Primary Schools	105
Lit. %	49.19

Source: Census of India, Provisional Population Totals, Compiled by 7th March 2011

SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

Despite the history of political movement like Gandhiji's Satyagraha, Gaunaha remains one of the most backward areas of the district and of the state. The block is predominantly agrarian but there are wide discrepancies in landholding pattern around 20 per cent upper caste people own 80 per cent cultivable land.

A large number of the population is either marginal farmers or daily wagers working in agriculture fields, or migrants to other cities in search of job. Out of this 60 per cent of the migrants are from Tribals, Dalits and other Backward Castes, working in agriculture and allied sectors. Many people, especially unlearned and unskilled youth migrate to Punjab, Haryana, Uttaranchal and metropolitan cities like Delhi, Kolkata, and Mumbai. Migration from the area

leaves women and children back home. They are prone to exploitation by government machinery, brokers, money lenders, contractors, politicians and antisocial elements. Of late a large number of migrants are in the southern states, especially Kerala working in construction sites and factories.

There is a huge number of feudal landlords who own 'farms' and the other people in the area live in fear and have to work in their farms. Its known to the block administration that as many number of the villages in the block (157), so many (152) are the 'farm houses' most of them belonging to the absentee landlords whose caretakers still force people to work in their farms and pay people a meagre amount of money. Though the government's employment scheme (MGNREGA) is in place, the actual implementation suffers and people do not get the stipulated amount. The entire area suffers from a feudal mindset. The innocence of the people is made use and exploited and as a result bribery and cheating is very common.

There is very little that happens without middlemen and bribery, starting from opening a bank account in the State Bank of India, Gaunaha branch, all the way up to the sanctioning of an *Indira Awas* (The government of India's mass scale Housing Scheme).

Gaunaha being, the district, state, national and International border, the place has its peculiarities and vulnerabilities. It is known for trafficking, smuggling and organized crime like kidnapping. The number of rivers emanating from the Himalayan mountain ranges which crisscross the border areas with heavy silt formation cause frequent floods. Considerable stretch of land remains submerged for more than four months in a year, leading to low agriculture productivity and several other related problems. To be specific 11 villages have disappeared as the water from Nepal washed them away. Due to floods, in many areas, the children's schooling is affected as for almost four months either they are unable to cross the rivers or the teachers are unable to reach.

SOCIAL ACTION

The current Activities in Social Action are

Empowerment of Women through SHGs

At present we have about 140 SHGs that are functioning well. Through SHG ,we spreading awareness about MGNREGA(Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme), Gram Sabha (the local governance), Right to Service, a new Act enacted by the government of Bihar for better public service, Public Distribution System, Right to Education, Anganwadicentres etc.



Chief Minister of Bihar Interacting with SHG Women

Most of the SHGs of the organization are among the Tharu Tribe Communities. As part of the Chief Minister of Bihar's Sewa Yatra, he visited one of the Tharu villages and interacted closely with three SHG women of ours. The women also arranged an exhibition of the Tharu Tribal community artifacts. The programme a wide coverage and good impact. The women requested him for residential schools for their children and in principle it was granted. The process is still on. The programme also helped highlight and promote Tharu tribal culture.

Educational Intervention among the Bhuiys-Musahars:

At present with two projects we have 24 Supplementary Education Centres. We have about 1400 children who are direct beneficiaries of this programme.



Specially designed Non-formal Text books with emphasis on conscientisation are available to children. After the SECs the Instructor of the centre makes sure that every child goes to the school. With children coming regularly to the classes, child labour and child marriage was reduced drastically.

Empowerment through Social Media

We have a Nukkad team comprising of 8 artists who are trained by us. The group performs street plays and Katputali shows. This programme goes on for 5 months a year. The team goes to Women's groups as well as Adolescent girls groups that are formed in the last one year.



Skill Building for the Adolescent girls though Tailoring Centres

At present we have 10 tailoring centers for the adolescent girls. We are catering to 150 girls (Tharus, Oraons) directly through this programme.



The tailoring programme is conducted in for a period of nine months. Prior to the selection of girls, the protect team gave the opportunity to socially and economically the most marginalized communities. Immediately after the training is over, those who get training is able to earn a good living as there is a growing demand for tailoring in the villages. With a girl having a skill, that boosted her self-esteem.

Kishori Groups

During the last one year we have had formed about 25 Kishori girl groups. The leaders of the group have had trainings and the girls meet regularly with an Animator. With this we are directly in touch with another 300 adolescent girls. 32 Adolescent girls group are formed. Every month

they have a formal meeting where the Animator sits with them discussing various issues pertaining to them. In the group discussions there have been emphases on health and hygiene, the negative impacts of child marriage, the need for educating girls etc. This has helped in reducing child marriage among young girls. Some of the girls have begun to save some money among them.



Small –Scale Advocacy Initiatives

The organization along with the oppressed has tried to bring into focus the exploitation by the elite and the government officials. Also there has been a momentum in gaining parcha for 60 landless poor. Some of our achievements are

- We have been able to address certain concern regarding PDS distribution in the block. Pressurising the Elected Representatives for the same was a big strategy. The women collectively bargained saying that if proper PDS distribution is not ensured, they would not vote for them again. They also stressed on the PDS shops opening and closing at the stipulated time.
- Empowering people to actively participate in Gram-sabha has been a grand success this year. Gram Sabhas have been conducted in at least 5 panchayats on the demand on women.
- The SHG members along with the Adolescent girls have intervened and have improved the day today running of schools in Rupawalia, Jamhouli, Katrav and Srinagar. In these places the Mid Day Meals (MDMs) have also been regularized.
- In Sreerampur village, the women intervened for the clearance of MNREGA payments as they forced the Mukhya to pay full. The awareness on MNREGA has reduced much of corruption surrounding MNREGA.

- In Amolva and Jamunia banks where the bank personnel were not opening accounts for the SHG women, they held dharnas in front of the banks and now the women are treated well with their accounts open.
- In Premnagar the women have been instrumental in proper functioning of the Anganwadi.
- SHGs of Katrav, Jamunia, Dumriya, Bhavanipur, Tahkol and Murali have initiated new Income Generation activities such as bankle shops, grocery shops, cattle raring.
- In Pohara, with the intervention of SHG women, liquor sale was completely banned.

Mata Samitis

Mothers of the children studying in the SECs have been brought under the umbrella of Mata-Samitis. The members have been trained and we have seen a lot of responsibility taken by these women in their locality, especially with regard to smooth running of the centres in their own respective villages.



Women's Day Celebration

FORMAL SCHOOL: ST. XAVIER'S

St. Xavier's School, Gaunaha (formerly known as Bal Siksha Sadan) emerged as a response to the need of the hour. With its social work involvements in the entire Tharuhat belt of Gaunaha, the organisation felt that there is a greater need to provide the focus communities with quality education. Also there was a felt need to take the children, especially girls children upto matric level.

On March 1, 2002 the decision was made to start the school in a temporary setting. The then Director along with the people of the locality formed a committee to look after various concerns relating to the establishment and maintenance of the school. In 2004 with the financial support of Patna Jesuit Society (PJS) a building was put up with five classrooms and with an office cum staff room. The school was started on Jan3, 2005 with 4 classes (LKG, UKG, Class I and II) and 5 untrained teachers with the Social Work background in JSB, with a total strength of 251 children. Many of the first batch children were children from the Tribal and Dalit communities who were studying in the Non-Formal Centres run by JSB. There was a growing demand for education. Therefore, in the same year PJS gave another grant and the first floor was ready with another six rooms. The number of girls taking admission increased and a room of the school was allotted for the girls to stay. Gradually when the third floor was put up the boys from far away villages also was given a place to stay. Initially there was no plan for establishing and maintaining a hostel.

The number of children went up every year. This year the strength of the school has reached 900. From the very beginning, the fees taken were Rs 50 per child and some of the children were given concessions too, depending on their socio-economic background. The classes are from LKG to Std VIII along with NIOS Matric and Plus Two coaching. A look at the caste-wise breakup of the students reveal the type of community and children the school caters to.

SC	ST	OBC	MUSLIMS	U.C
132	307	252	127	2

SC has a strength of 132 among whom 58 belong to the Musahar Community. Among the total number of Tribals (307), Tharus are large in numbers (248) and Oraons are 30, the second major group. The Musahar children are given a special coaching in the afternoon. This at present is maintained from the Social Action Projects

As part of the school, there is a hostel with just minimum facilities provided which accommodates 200 children from 41 far and wide villages. The present proposal is for better hostel facilities for the girl children. In the school, we have children represented from 70 villages of Gaunaha Block. We have about 60 children in the NIOS (matric and Plus Two) Programme. The school has been registered under RTE.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF JSB

But of late much has been transformed in Gaunaha, especially among the poorest of the poor like the Mushars, the lowest in the caste trunk and the Tharu Tribes, much of the credit goes to JSB.

JSB has made outstanding contributions in the field of rural education. JSB, through its numerous rural educational programmes, non- formal centres and unique strategies have brought to hundreds of adults, children and youth who were otherwise excluded by the mainstream education system, the benefits of literacy and education. JSB has achieved much in the educational mainstreaming of the deprived sections of society, especially, **girls**.

With organizing of women, they have begun to feel a collective strength and have moved ahead with their savings into small entrepreneurship initiatives. The women have realized their entitlements and rights and have begun to uphold them. Through the skill building programmes like the tailoring in 10 centres, of late the young girls prior to their marriage have become self-reliant to a great extent. The Direct Beneficiaries of the JSB's Programme have been:

Programme	Number	No. of Beneficiaries	Villages covered
SHGs	140 groups	2100	78
Kishori (Young girls) Groups	32 groups	384	32
Skill Building through Tailoring	10 centres	157	10
Supplementary Education Centres (SECs)	26	1000	12
TOTAL		3641	

PROBLEMS/ CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED:

TheMushar community has still a long way to go, at times in between the number of children used to be oscillating at times but not less than 30 children on an average in any centre. The SGSY programme of the government for livelihood is going through some transformation and being combined with the Rural Livelihood Mission. But in this part of the state nothing much has been initiated by the Government.

There still seems to be widespread and deep rooted corruption in the grass root level.

CONCLUSION

Gaunaha has been a special place of the social action involvement. It's a grace-filled place with the hard work of a 'one-man institution' and a 'one-man-army' like Joseph Srampi. The organization has contributed much to the educational interventions in this area, especially educating the poorest of the poor. We have also conscientised a lot of people through well-

designed trainings. Similarly women empowerment through SHGs and skill enhancement programmes for young girls has make a marked difference.

The new team has been by and large successful in building upon where Srampi has left. The social action has expanded a bit more, keeping in mind the need for consolidation and quality too. The school has gone a long way ahead. We only hope and pray that we march ahead in a true spirit of discernment.

Further Organizational Details

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