

A Profile of Manthan

Centre for Awareness, Action, Research and Training

1. Manthan



Manthan is a voluntary organization of the Patna Jesuits working among the marginalised and oppressed poor of Bihar for more than 23 years as a registered society and as a social action centre for more than 45 years. Manthan activities in Khagaul, Patna District are spread over three blocks (Phulwary, Danapur, Bihata) The major activities include Education, Cultural, Health, Sanitation, Training, Human Rights,

Women Empowerment, Research etc.

Manthan in Hindi means churning and in extension it means being an organisation that provides space and scope for churning of different thoughts that lead to social transformation and change.

Manthan is committed to work with the poorest of the poor (Maha Dalits) to empower them through different types of education for awareness, access to health care systems, legal provisions, human rights, women's rights, child rights, universalization of literacy, etc.

Manthan envisage the Development and Welfare of the marginalized and disadvantaged sections like women, Dalits, Mahadalits (Musahars) and minorities in particular and the poor and other disadvantaged sections in general.



2. Vision of Manthan

Being rooted and grounded in the charism of our Lord Jesus' Values we the Manthan community envisage to create a human society where the

relationship among the people will be characterised by human values especially love, justice equality, peace, harmony, etc. We also resolve to create a just humane society.

3. Mission of Manthan

To Work towards the Economic, Social, Political, Cultural and Religious equality and social harmony- harmony with nature and environmental concerns among the people and to create an opportunity in economic, social, especially with regard to caste and gender, political, cultural and religious freedom of expression and growth in educational front.

3. The Existence and Function of Manthan

1) In the initial phase of close sharing of the life of the poor and the programmes of conscientisation led to the understanding of the social reality and the reasons for the poor being poor. This was a period of questioning and also searching for answers in terms of development of the poor.

2) Manthan emerged as a well recognised and respected non-governmental, voluntary organisation working for the welfare of the people. The government officials looked up to Manthan to give shape to its educational and developmental works. For more than three decades, Manthan was one of the three District Resource Units in Bihar for the implementation of non-formal education. Manthan prepared text books, trained thousands of teachers of non-formal education and ran more than hundred non-formal education centres.



3) Based on the experience of last two decades, Manthan realised that working for the poor is one thing but working for the Dalits and especially the Musahars is the most important intervention that it can make in the lives of the people of the area. From this time onwards, most of the programmes of Manthan were primarily focused on Musahars. Manthan's attention on the Musahars has begun to yield its



results in terms of mainstreaming of education among this community, social awareness, economic mobility, leadership etc.

4. Priority Groups



Based on the years of work among the poor in the area, based on the analysis of the emerging social scenario, Manthan has opted to work with and among the Dalits and Mahadalit communities. Among them the Musahars would constitute the primary focus.

Among the Musahars, Mahadalits and Dalits, Manthan would further focus on children, girl children,

adolescent girls and women.

Having stated this, it needs to be reiterated that Manthan works among all the poor irrespective of caste, class, creed etc, since this is also a group that needs some external intervention.

5. External Context

- In a fast moving and changing world, the underprivileged Dalits, Mahadalits and the Musahars are left behind or do not benefit from the changes introduced.
- A government that appears to be benevolent by enacting various legislations and implementing many schemes but is fundamentally anti-people and anti-poor.
- In the centres of power, the lives and struggles of these vulnerable communities do not get adequate space. They are expanded beyond limits and lose out on all fronts.
- The youth of these communities are on the one hand bombarded by the media an easy and better life on the other hand their life in reality is miserable and unenviable. Due to this they get frustrated and even become anti-social elements.
- These communities themselves are struggling with too many baggages of the past history. Their attempt to get out of these constraining histories seems to be meeting with greater resistance from the powerful.
- In this negative scenario, the opportunity to be at the side of the struggling masses.

6. Internal Context

- The dwindling human and financial resource of Manthan and of PJS has direct impact on the implementation of programs and carrying forward the objectives of Manthan.
- The inability of Manthan to change according to the times and evolving itself into a resource organisation
- The demand on Manthan by the priority groups to provide scope and space for addressing their issues and the inability of Manthan to mobilise human and financial resources
- There is great opportunity before Manthan to play the coordinating role with other civil society organisations. In the past, it was doing this coordinating work.

7. Major Interventions of Manthan

- ❖ Community mobilisation and organisation
- ❖ Village animation and awareness creation
- ❖ Non Formal Education (NFE)
- ❖ Adult Education (AE) centres
- ❖ Complementary Education Centres
- ❖ Coordinating Self Help Groups among Musahar women in Danapur, Bihata and Phulwari Sharif Blocks
- ❖ Training of educational functionaries, instructors, supervisors and others
- ❖ Vocational training for young Musahar and Mahadalit boys and girls leading to NIOS certification.
- ❖ Manthan has a dozen committed and trained personnel who are involved in micro level activities for the fulfilment of the objectives of the organisation. These function as the core team of Manthan.

DIFFERENT PROJECTS, THEIR PURPOSE AND ACTIVITIES

1. 15 Days Residential Trainings (*Kindermisionwerk*)



Our Main Aims in running these 15 days residential trainings are:

1. Give the children an opportunity to see how a good education is given with qualified teachers for each subjects with regular classes, self studies, home-works etc.
2. Raise their interest in the need for education in today's world.
3. To give a sense of all around self-development by participating in singing, dancing, drawings, by conducting assemblies and taking part in

dramas and even doing some teaching. 4. making them aware of the value of time and how to make full use of it unlike they are doing in the village. 5. Give them an opportunity to meet people from other villages and develop good relationships. 6. Make them aware of the inhuman way of their living and help them to come up in society.

Our Achievements in 15 days training programme: 1. Because of these trainings, many more children from this community have begun going to schools. 2. They have been able to present skits, songs etc in the schools and in the village itself. 3. A lot of improvement in discipline and good behaviour. 4. As parents are fully involved in this program with meetings at the centre and here at Manthan, their interest too has increased. 5. They have learned to keep themselves neat and clean. 6. As their leadership qualities are being developed, they are able to meet anybody and put their needs before them. 7. As boys and girls live here together as brothers and sisters, they are able to handle many a problem. They are able to think a loud with the larger society and able to think for themselves.

2. Integrated Empowerment Action (James Percy Foundation)

This project, “Integrated Empowerment Action” is a program to address crucial capability deprivations of the most excluded communities. The most excluded communities, namely, Musahars, Doms, Dhankads in nearly 100 villages selected from 5 districts in Bihar is the beneficiaries of this project. The project, with a few decades of experience and grass-root involvement of Patna Jesuit Social Action, is a novel approach to the empowerment action in Bihar. It interlinks a chain of empowerment actions addressed to children and women.

In terms of the outcome of this programme, it can be stated that over 120 students at the high school level were provided opportunity for a 3 hour teaching and learning. These HRCs too carried out 3 hours of teaching and learning through which the students were able to follow up whatever they learnt in the schools. Since there is not much of teaching that goes on in the schools, for many students the CHRC is the only place where they can carry out learning. This also discourages both the parents and students who are tempted to go for special coaching centres where they have to pay a substantial amount of money for the classes. Most of the parents cannot afford to invest in this tuition. Thus, organising teaching and learning by Manthan through the human resource centres takes away the financial burden on the parents who are poverty stricken.

3. Education Programme for the Musahar Children (James Percy Foundation)

This project, attempts to ensure educational mainstreaming of Musahar children. Since the children from this community are usually out of school and out of education, it was envisaged that some concerted efforts to ensure their education would bring in other changes in the community.

3.3.1. The objectives of this programme

- ❖ Enrolment of out of school children in the school
- ❖ Prevention of drop outs
- ❖ Motivation of children to education
- ❖ Enabling children to have good foundation in Hindi and basic Arithmetic
- ❖ Mobilization of village community to send their children to school
- ❖ Prevention of child labour
- ❖ Empowerment of village community to avail all the benefits of welfare schemes meant for children as well as for others

3.3.2. Strategy

- Primary education of 1250 to 1500 Musahar children with good academic foundation in Hindi, English and Mathematics
- Create 50 Musahar hamlets with 80-90 percent school enrolment and retention ratio
- Motivate and capacitate 50 *Mata Samitis* consisting of mothers of children benefiting
- Create a group of enlightened women leaders, student leaders and volunteers who would continue to play positive role in sustaining and taking forward the educational motivation in the community

3.3.3. Assessment of the Outcome

Enrollment drive was undertaken in all the 50 centres and due to this around 240 children were enrolled in schools from January 2012 to June 2012. Regular contact with the schools is maintained to ensure the retention of these children enrolled in schools. Village meetings were held in 25 villages to motivate the communities so as to ensure mainstreaming of education.

4. Empowerment of Dalit Women and Adolescent Girls (Caritas India)

Manthan like many other civil society organisations believes that women's empowerment is a process whereby women get the opportunity to organize

themselves to increase their own self-reliance, to assert their independent right to make choices and control resources which will assist in challenging and eliminating their subordination. Empowerment is a participatory process, which begins at the levels of home and community. Empowerment is also a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation, to great decision making power and control, and to transformative action which enables individuals or groups to change balances of power in social, economic and political relations in society. Any attempt to provide scope and space for women for their empowerment should give women freedom of choice, equal access to domestic and community resources, opportunities and powers.

Manthan's effort to empower women from the Dalit communities is a proof of its commitment to be part of the lives and struggles of the poor in general and the most vulnerable and marginalized in particular. In a special way, Manthan has been working in the areas of empowerment of Musahar and Mahadalit communities of central Bihar. Among these, women and adolescent girls constitute the priority. Manthan also believes that since women and adolescent girls are the most excluded in these communities, any special intervention in their lives to empower them would go a long way in their own growth and development and also would contribute in the emancipation of these communities.

5. Long Term Residential Training Programme

Over the years of intervention in the lives of the people of the area, especially that of the Dalits and Mahadalits, Manthan realised that periodic withdrawal of the children from the not-so-education friendly atmosphere of their hamlets or villages is vital to 1) enhance academic competency, 2) to inculcate study habits, 3) to sustain educational motivation, 4) to enhance self-confidence and self-esteem, 5) to develop their personality, 6) to develop leadership qualities, 7) to develop the skills, talents hidden in them, 8) to inculcate social consciousness and social responsibility etc. In a sense, the residential programme is aimed at providing opportunity for the less privileged children so that they are also able to progress in their lives.

The long term residential training programme is conducted for 2 years for the students from these communities so that they study 9th and 10th standard and also have the opportunity to prepare them to appear in the final examination. For 2 years, select students stay in the hostel, attend the government school and also have remedial coaching programmes in the hostel. This 2 year programme is designed in such a way that provides the opportunity for education, discipline and total development. In the year

2013- 2014, there are 10 students in the 10th Standard and 10 in the 9th Standard.

6. Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

Since Manthan's work is predominantly with the socially and economically marginalized, a lot of people come to the office almost every day complaining of violation of their rights. These cases are recorded and efforts are made to find solutions with the help of the victims. First and foremost village level meetings are held to ascertain the details about the violation of rights. Attempts are made to address the issue at the local level. Where this is not possible, then other means of redressal mechanisms are attempted. The solution might be group action, protest march and lodging complaints with the appropriate authorities. Support systems are also developed at the village level so that the victims themselves find ways and means of getting their rights through mass mobilization and action.

These rights include benefiting from government schemes that are specifically framed for these people. Health care, proper drinking water, sanitation and hygiene etc are also the rights that are often denied to these people. Manthan tries to ensure that the people are aware of these schemes and rights and organize people to get them. Along with this, free legal aid is provided to those who seek help in this line.

7. Major Cultural Activities

Celebration of special days that are of national importance has been a tradition of Manthan for a long time. These are Independence Day, Republic Day, Ambedkar Jayanti, Children's Day and Teacher's Day etc. These were not only celebrated at every educational centre but also in Manthan's office and hostel. Along with cultural programs, competitions such as quiz, story writing, painting, etc were also undertaken. These celebrations become a means to instil in the children the importance of education, discipline etc. Children continue to remember these celebrations.