

Annual report (2023 – 2024)

Empowering communities: Advancing Health and well - being



JanMitraNyas (JMN)

Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC of UN

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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Supporters and Partners,

This year has been a testament to the resilience and dedication of the JanMitra Nyas team and the communities we serve. Through our concerted efforts, we have made significant strides in addressing critical health, psychosocial, and livelihood challenges faced by survivors of torture, marginalized groups, and vulnerable populations. Our initiatives have brought hope, healing, and empowerment to many, and we remain committed to our mission of fostering a just and equitable society.

As we move forward, we remain committed to our mission of fostering a just and equitable society. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who have supported us on this journey, and we look forward to continuing our efforts to create lasting change.

Warm regards,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lenin Raghuvanshi'. The signature is stylized and includes a flourish at the end.

**(Lenin Raghuvanshi)
CEO, JanMitra Nyas**

Letter from the Chairperson



Dear Friends and Allies,

It is with great pride that I reflect on the achievements of JanMitra Nyas during the year 2023-2024, a testament to our unwavering commitment to human rights, empowerment, and community well-being. Through our collective efforts, we have made significant strides in improving the lives of marginalized communities, particularly children, women, and survivors of organized violence and torture.

As Chairperson, I am deeply grateful to our dedicated staff, volunteers, donors, and partners who have made these achievements possible. Your unwavering support fuels our determination to continue advocating for human rights and creating positive change in our society.

Together, we are making a profound impact, and I look forward to our continued journey towards a more just and equitable society.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'Sant Vivek Das'.

**(Sant Vivek Das)
Chairperson**

Key Achievements

During the year 2023-2024, JanMitra Nyas made remarkable strides across several areas, with a primary focus on the health and well-being of children, women, and survivors of organized violence and torture.

Health Initiatives:

Our health initiatives were at the forefront of our efforts, significantly improving maternal and child health. We conducted numerous medical camps, prenatal check-ups, and advocacy for nutritional support. Specifically, we served a total child population of 6,147 (3,135 boys and 3,012 girls) across four blocks, one urban area, 48 villages, two mohallas, and 2,681 households, covering a population of 12,919. The communities included Musahar, Nut, Dhobi, Chamar, Muslim, and other backward castes such as Chauhan, Gupta, Rajbhar, Prajapati, and Mali.

Medical and Psychosocial Support:

In Bazardiha, our medical camps provided essential treatment to 130 survivors of police brutality. Our psycho-social rehabilitation efforts supported 166 individuals through testimonial therapy, creating safe spaces for trauma expression.

Legal Advocacy and Compensation:

We handled 172 legal cases, securing significant victories and disbursing \$208,564 USD in compensation for 11 cases related to police torture.

Livelihood and Education:

Our livelihood programs empowered over 1,000 individuals by offering sustainable income opportunities. Additionally, we awarded

scholarships to 118 girls, ensuring access to education for marginalized communities.

Community Initiatives:

Our plantation drive in Raup Village and Musahar ghettos symbolized resilience and renewal, distributing 3,000 plants. Bridge courses were implemented for 161 children from marginalized communities to ensure the full realization of the Right to Education (RTE) at the grassroots level.

Combatting Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs):

Efforts to combat NCDs and address the double burden of malnutrition saw significant progress through the Front-of-Package Labeling (FOPL) initiative. This campaign, supported by prominent political leaders and the Samruddha Bharat Foundation, mobilized public support and collected 1,289 signatures submitted to the Prime Minister. National and state-level food manufacturers' associations were engaged, culminating in a nationwide sensitization workshop. Media engagement was pivotal, with strategic press statements and an impactful documentary highlighting the need for FOPL. Collaborative workshops and advocacy efforts with MPs and state governments further emphasized the importance of clear food labeling in promoting public health.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) made an interim order for warning labels on unregulated ultra-processed foods to curb NCDs, aligning with the vision of the Government of India. A meeting with 53 Members of Parliament resulted in 10 MPs providing written support, and these MPs were honored with the Jan Swasthya Samman.

Community Engagement and Capacity Building:

We facilitated multiple community meetings and delivered capacity-building sessions to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) focused on

addressing NCDs. Our advocacy efforts included engaging with four state governments for the adoption and implementation of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) regulations concerning school food. We also engaged in dialogue with food industries to secure their support and collaboration in advancing this initiative.

These achievements underscore our commitment to human rights, empowerment, and community well-being, reflecting our mission to foster a just and equitable society.

Detailed Program Reports

Health

Medical treatment: In Bazardiha, health camps provided essential medical treatment to 130 survivors, including 73 women and 57 men, who endured police brutality and false accusations during the Anti-CAA movement. These camps served as symbols of hope, resilience, and solidarity for survivors navigating the aftermath of trauma. They highlight the transformative impact of the health camps, offering more than just medical aid. They signify a beacon of hope and empowerment for survivors striving to overcome the aftermath of injustice and trauma.

Health: Non – Non-communicable Diseases and Double Burden of Malnutrition: Significant strides were made in advancing the Front-of-Package Labeling (FOPL) initiative to combat Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). The project acknowledged the unwavering dedication and support of Members of Parliament, Members of the Legislative Council, and prominent political leaders in championing FOPL with warning labels, especially in the context of women's and child health. Notably, one Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) and a prominent political party took proactive measures by writing a letter to the Prime Minister of India, urgently drawing attention to and expressing their support for FOPL. This concerted effort reflects the growing momentum and support for this critical cause.

Moreover, routine meetings were conducted to involve political leaders with substantial social media influence, aiming to garner their continued support for the campaign. Members of the PIPAL network were mobilized to garner public support for Mandatory Warning Label Front-of-Package Labeling (FOPL), resulting in the collection of 1,289 signatures formally submitted to the Prime

Minister of India. A pivotal meeting with Shri Pushparaj Deshpande, the Managing Trustee of the Samruddha Bharat Foundation (SBF), played a crucial role in gaining support from the foundation and the political parties associated with it.



Routine meetings were held with national and state-level food manufacturers' associations to secure their support on the critical issue of FOPL. These efforts culminated in the successful organization of the "Empowering Healthier Choices: Sensitization Workshop on Front of Package Labeling," which had a nationwide impact and received media recognition.

Extensive research was conducted to map food industries and associations, resulting in the preparation of a research paper titled "Navigating the Complex Landscape of Front-of-Package Food Labeling: Perspectives from Food Industry Associations." Media engagement played a central role during this period, with regular press statements and media briefings aimed at updating journalists

and communication professionals on emerging FOPL issues. Eight media moments were strategically created, including five proactive engagements highlighting the benefits of FOPL and its impact on public health, and three reactive engagements addressing misconceptions and concerns. A well-crafted OPED was published, further amplifying the importance of clear labeling. Additionally, quotations were strategically placed in newspapers during significant occasions such as Rakshabandhan and Independence Day, effectively spreading awareness.



A powerful documentary compiled by renowned journalist Mr. Ajay Prakash served as a stark reminder of the urgent need for FOPL regulations to protect public health, emphasizing the substantial impact of addiction to unregulated packaged foods and the crucial role of clear labeling. Lastly, comprehensive research and investigations were conducted to address FOPL and food product

labeling concerns, focusing on specific products such as Kurkure and Cadbury Bournvita biscuits. These efforts have significantly contributed to the ongoing initiatives to promote healthier food choices and safeguard public health through clear and informative labeling.

On July 21, 2023, the Peoples' Vigilance Committee on Human Rights (PVCHR), Food Industries Welfare Association (FIWA), and Bhartiya Vyapar Mandal collaboratively organized a highly impactful Sensitization Workshop centered around "Front of Package Labelling." This event took place at the Deputy Speaker Hall (Annexe) of the Constitution Club of India in New Delhi and drew a diverse array of stakeholders. Among the attendees were representatives from the food industry, various food industry associations, government bodies such as NAFED, FSSAI, and MSME, as well as think tanks, Members of Parliament, and civil society organizations.



- A meeting with 53 Members of Parliament resulted in 10 MPs providing written support. These MPs were honored with the JanSwasthya Samman.
- Multiple community meetings and capacity-building sessions were conducted for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) focused on addressing Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).



- Advocacy with four state governments for the adoption and implementation of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) regulations concerning school food.
- Engagement with food industries to secure their support and collaboration.

Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health:

The mortality rate and major causes among women and children necessitated a focused effort by the JanMitra Nyas team. To address and reduce this mortality rate, various activities were conducted in the project area, emphasizing reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health and nutrition services. Women in the project area require access to antenatal care during pregnancy, skilled care during delivery, and care and support for several weeks postpartum.



In the project area, 100 Village Health Hygiene Nutrition Days (VHSND) were organized every month in 50 villages to provide access to prenatal check-ups and vaccinations, which were closely monitored by the team. Advocacy was carried out in villages where VHSND was irregular. On the Prime Minister's Safe Motherhood Campaign Day (PMSMA), held on the 9th of every month, and in the OPD of Health Wellness Center PHC (CHC), free treatment was provided to 40 HRG groups (19 women and 21 children: 10 boys and 11 girls), significantly contributing to reducing the death rate.

Key initiatives included:

- Preparing care plans for 425 pregnant women, holding regular meetings, providing information about available services, and registering these women at Anganwadi Centers, linking them to THR.
- Providing adequate quantities of pulses, oil, and porridge to eligible children, and pregnant and lactating women in Anei Musahar Colony of Badagaon. Complaints about insufficient nutrition were addressed by the supervisor, ensuring everyone received the correct amount of nutrition.

- Requesting double nutrition for two months for left-out pregnant women from the CDPO in Parmandapur, ensuring all eligible beneficiaries received nutrition.



- Ensuring proper THR distribution in Ahmednagar of Bajardiha after raising concerns about irregular and insufficient THR distribution.
- Creating and sharing a special plan for women with high-risk pregnancies with CDPO, resulting in 28 pregnant women receiving double nutrition.
- Linking 425 pregnant women to the VHND program as per the care plan, providing them with prenatal check-ups and iron calcium tablets.
- Advocacy efforts leading to 9 women from nearby brick kilns receiving THR, and 7 women receiving T1 vaccinations, 3 women receiving T2, and 2 women receiving boosters.
- Lobbying efforts ensuring 45 pregnant women in Araj Line Block and Harhua Block received THR after a two-month gap.
- Addressing the lack of VHNDs in Puarikhurd village, resulting in 16 VHNDs being organized simultaneously in Harhua.



- Collaborating in the deworming campaign for children aged 1 to 19 years, linking the project area's children to this campaign.
- Connecting malnourished and underweight children to NRC services, with 28 children added to NRC.
- Organizing awareness campaigns on preventing seasonal diseases, with 46 sessions involving 530 participants.
- Conducting vaccination campaigns, including 18 sessions with 380 participants and 12 awareness rallies, with 25 teenagers participating in wall writing.
- Initiating 6 health camps through lobbying efforts, providing services to 223 children.
- Holding the first training event for VHSNC on November 2, 2023, at Panchayat Bhawan, Baragaon, attended by 45 participants, including the CDPO, HEO, Chief Servant, Asha Sangini, CHO, VHSNC President, Village Head, Panchayat members, Asha workers, and ANM workers.
- Organizing a meeting on community-based malnutrition management with financial support from CRY in Village Panchayat Ghoghri, Nehiyar, Jagdishpur, Thana, and Ramai Patti of Block Pindra. The meeting included VHSNC members and ICDS Sahayogini Matru Samiti members.

- Participating in an innovation dialogue on nutrition and health organized by the District Child Protection Unit, Varanasi, discussing healthy and happy childhood, safe motherhood, newborn child health, and nutritional care.



- Conducting community awareness programs at the village level to enhance WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) and waste management infrastructure and services.
- Meeting with 280 adolescent girls, providing detailed information on personal hygiene, the use of sanitary pads, and the importance of precautions under menstrual hygiene management, encouraging frequent handwashing with soap.
- Holding meetings with teenage groups and mother groups on menstruation, health, nutrition, personal hygiene, and care in Bajardiha, and the urban areas of Harhua, Pindra, Baragaon, and Arajiline blocks in Varanasi district, educating girls on the skill of handwashing.

The JanMitraNyas team also identified 432 pregnant women and 256 lactating women and connected them with NHM and other schemes. The details are as follows:

1. **Bank Account Opening:** The process of opening bank accounts was completed for 366 out of 432 pregnant women who did not have one.
2. **Maternity Bandana Scheme:** 28 pregnant women were added to the Maternity Bandana Scheme. There are 159 women eligible for this scheme, and the applications of the remaining 131 women have been submitted online.
3. **THR Linkage:** 360 women were linked to THR.
4. **ICDS Registration:** 395 pregnant women were registered in ICDS. Out of these, 394 women received iron tablets, 26 pregnant women received folic acid tablets, and 394 pregnant women received calcium tablets.

Linking 256 Lactating Women to Schemes:

- 117 women were added to JSY.
- 19 HRPs received treatment and were saved through services provided by IPHS and NHM.

Scholarship and Education

Scholarships were granted to 118 girls from marginalized and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, providing essential financial support for higher education.



Bridge courses were implemented for 161 children from marginalized communities to ensure the full realization of RTE at the grassroots level.



Livelihood

To provide sustainable livelihood opportunities to survivors of torture, addressing their specific needs, and ensuring long-term sustainability:

1. **Dependents of Survivors Deceased in Police Custody:** Three survivors – Usha, Kiran, and Reena – were identified. These women are responsible for their children and rely entirely on their families for support.
2. **Individuals Who Have Faced Torture:** The project chose survivors who have personally endured police torture, impacting their ability to earn a livelihood.

3. Communities Facing Persistent Police Torture: Six communities, including Raup Ghasia Basti, were identified. These communities expend their entire incomes on securing bail and legal proceedings.

Livelihood Support Provided:

Livelihood Options	Male	Female	Total
Goat	10	11	21
Kitchen gardening	170	205	375
Fruit trees	232	415	647
Shop	-	1	1
Total	412	632	1044

Seasonal vegetable seeds such as Bitter Gourd, Bottle Gourd, Beans, Corn, Pumpkin, and Sweet Gourd were distributed to the survivors.



Plantation

On August 20, 2023, three thousand plants were donated, symbolizing renewal and resilience in the face of adversity. The distribution took place in Raup Village of Sonbhadra, as well as six Musahar ghettos in Sonbhadra and Varanasi.



Social Justice and Inclusion

Psycho-Social Rehabilitation

Vital support was provided to 166 survivors, comprising 86 males and 80 females, including 131 primary victims and 35 secondary victims. Testimonial therapy served as a central approach, emphasizing empathy and open communication to establish a secure space for survivors to express their traumatic experiences. Both individual and group therapy sessions were conducted, focusing on aiding those affected by police torture and administrative repression. These survivors hailed from the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand in India.

To scientifically assess the well-being and mental health of these survivors, a Pre and Post M&E (Monitoring and Evaluation) questionnaire based on the WHO-Five Well-Being Index with the participation scale was used. Many survivors faced emotional struggles, with few consistently reporting feeling cheerful, relaxed, active, and vigorous. Additionally, a substantial portion of the

surveyed individuals did not consistently engage in activities that interested them, highlighting potential issues related to emotional well-being and life satisfaction.



Honor Ceremonies

During the third session of testimonial therapy, we held nine group honor ceremonies and individual honor ceremonies, providing recognition and validation to a total of 130 survivors. These ceremonies are vital in the healing process, offering a moment of dignity and acknowledgment to the survivors of torture and other forms of marginalization. The ceremonies were conducted in various significant contexts and locations to ensure maximum impact and community engagement.

Group Honor Ceremonies:

1. **Varanasi on UN Day in Support of Torture Victims:** This event, held on June 26th, aligned with the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. It was a powerful demonstration of solidarity and support for survivors, providing a platform for them to share their stories and receive public recognition.
2. **Unjust Retaliation: Musahar Community in Focus:** This ceremony highlighted the plight of the Musahar community,

who have faced severe social and economic marginalization. By honoring survivors from this community, we aimed to bring attention to their struggles and advocate for their rights.

3. **Resonance of Voices:** An event dedicated to amplifying the voices of survivors, allowing them to narrate their experiences and journey towards healing. This ceremony underscored the importance of listening to and validating the personal stories of survivors.
4. **A Tragic Tale of Betrayal: Seeking Justice:** This event focused on survivors who have experienced profound betrayal and injustice. It provided a platform for their voices to be heard and their resilience to be celebrated, reinforcing our commitment to seeking justice on their behalf.



Individual Honor Ceremonies:

In addition to the group ceremonies, we conducted 40 individual honor ceremonies. These personalized events were designed to offer survivors a private and focused environment to share their experiences and receive acknowledgment. These ceremonies play a

crucial role in the individual therapeutic process, providing survivors with a sense of recognition and closure.

Through these honor ceremonies, we aim to restore dignity, promote healing, and reinforce our commitment to justice and equity for all survivors. The ceremonies are a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the importance of community support in the journey towards recovery.

Capacity-Building Workshops

Four capacity-building workshops were delivered to survivors as part of this initiative. Former survivors who have benefited from this program served as trainers, known as Aguwas, to help other survivors.

Focus Group Discussions

Thirteen focus group discussions aimed to empower torture survivors, facilitate their path to healing, and foster the development of critical thinking and resilience. Topics included:

- Building Resilience and Empathy: A Journey
- Empowering Torture Survivors

Project Interventions and Legal Proceedings

A total of 172 cases involving survivors of torture were addressed, comprising 115 males and 57 females. Highlights include:

- **Legal Proceedings:** 12 cases were brought before the district court.
- **Compensation Disbursement:** \$208,564 USD was disbursed in compensation for 11 cases related to police torture.
- **Detailed Case Interventions:** 36 cases pertained to custodial deaths, 125 to police torture, 2 to extra-judicial killings, 1 to death in police firing, and 8 to custodial torture. 115 beneficiaries were male, and 57 were female.

- **Legal Victory -Paru Sonkar's Acquittal: A Triumph of Justice**

Paru Sonkar's acquittal by the district court highlighted the success of the project's legal interventions. The DIGNITY: Danish Institute against Torture had lent its support in the early days of Paru's case, laying the foundation for his defense. The International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims ensured his livelihood during the darkest hours of his life, while the UN Trust Fund for Torture Victims provided essential psycho-social and legal support. Kudos were also due to PVCHR (People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights), an organization that tirelessly coordinated efforts and continued to fight for justice.

But the story didn't end with Paru's acquittal. Another chapter unfolded, filled with hope and promise. Paru's daughter, Resham, persevered against all odds and passed her 10+2 exams with first-class honors, scoring an impressive 74%. Her academic achievement was a testament to her unwavering determination and the support she received. Parul Sharma and a group of 200 Swedish donors came forward to support Resham's education, transforming her dreams into reality. Now, she stood on the cusp of a new journey – university. However, Resham needed a bicycle to travel to the university, a humble request with the power to unlock a world of possibilities for her.

Paru Sonkar's story is not just about one man's triumph. It is a clarion call for change, a reminder that the principles of justice, dignity, and human rights are not mere words but the pillars of a just society. As Resham prepares to embark on her own path, it serves as a reminder that with support and determination, dreams can indeed come true, one pedal at a time.

For more details, visit: [Triumph of Truth: Paru Sonkar's Acquittal and the Unwavering Pursuit of Justice.](#)

This year marks the culmination of a significant milestone in our ongoing mission to promote cardiovascular health and protect the well-being of children and mothers. We are proud to announce the successful closeout of our project, "Consolidating collective voices for strong FoPL regulation to protect child and maternal health," as confirmed by Ms. Pamela Sumner Coffey, Vice President of Global Operations at Tobacco-Free Kids Action Fund.

Acknowledgements:

Our deepest gratitude goes to the Tobacco-Free Kids Action Fund, particularly Ms. Pamela Sumner Coffey and her team, for their steadfast support and guidance throughout the project. Your belief in our vision and commitment to improving global health have been pivotal to our success.

Project Details:

Objective: Amplify voices advocating for robust Front-of-Pack Labeling (FoPL) regulations to safeguard the health of vulnerable populations, especially children and mothers.

Funding: \$62,030 grant from Tobacco-Free Kids Action Fund.

Duration: October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023.

Achievements:

Through strategic advocacy and collaborative efforts, we aimed to create a more health-conscious society and ensure access to accurate nutritional information for all. The recognition extended to JanMitraNyas for its contributions to the Resolve to Save Lives initiative is a testament to our dedication and achievements in public health.

Future Directions:

We appreciate the continued technical assistance and support from Tobacco-Free Kids Action Fund. We are committed to exploring the advocacy tools provided and leveraging every available resource to further our mission.

Gratitude:

We extend our heartfelt thanks to every member of JanMitra Nyas and our partners who have dedicated their time, effort, and expertise to make this project a success. Your unwavering commitment and passion for improving health and well-being inspire us all.

Conclusion:

As we celebrate this milestone, we reaffirm our collective commitment to building a healthier and safer world for current and future generations. Together, we can turn the tide against cardiovascular diseases and ensure that every child and mother has the opportunity to lead a healthy and fulfilling life.

Read more about our work:

<https://healthofchildren.blogspot.com/2024/02/celebrating-partnership-step-towards.html>

Recognizing Achievements and Looking Forward with PVCHR

In a noteworthy development, PVCHR has been featured in the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) annual report. This recognition underscores our commitment to human rights, health, and empowerment. We are thrilled to share this acknowledgment, which highlights our ongoing efforts to create a world free from torture and oppression.

You can read the full feature on PVCHR's impactful work in the IRCT annual report here: <https://pvchr.blogspot.com/2024/05/pvchr-works-in-irct-annual-report.html>

PVCHR and JanMitraNyas remain dedicated to advancing human rights, promoting health, and empowering communities. Together, we continue to champion the cause of a healthier, safer, and more just world for all.

Empowering Communities Through Cultural Exchange Insights from the Sahastrabuddhe Kool Sammelan

The third convention of the Sahastrabuddhe Kool Sammelan, held in Varanasi on December 16th and 17th, 2023, was a remarkable gathering organized by Sahastrabuddhe Kool Pratisthan under the leadership of Shri Upendra Vinayak Sahasrabuddhe. Supported by JanMitra Nyas (JMN), this event underscored JMN's commitment to marginalized communities in India. Dr. Lenin Raghuvanshi, Founder-Chief Organizer of JMN, emphasized Indian diversity and constitutional values, echoing Varanasi's spiritual significance. The convention celebrated India's cultural richness and promoted interfaith harmony, encapsulating the community's resilience and historical evolution. The event's success exemplified JMN's dedication to societal upliftment through cultural exchange.

Link: <https://pvchr.blogspot.com/2024/04/illuminating-excellence-janmitra-nyas.html>

Annual Financial Summary

Financial Year	Receipt	Payment
2023 - 2024	13262932.80	14054477.78