CHAPTER II

NON-GUJARATIS' CONTRIBUTION TO THE SOCIO-CULTURAL SECTOR OF KACHCHH

Arya Samaj at Global Level:

Arya Samaj, a worldwide organization, was founded by Mahrishi Dayanand Saraswati in 1875. Today, this 139 years old socio-philanthropic organization has more than 8000 branches all over the world and is relentlessly active in social, educational, cultural and spiritual fields.

Contribution Of Arya Samaj To The Nation:

Arya Samaj has played a leading role in all social and educational reforms like:

- Arya Samaj was actively involved in struggle for independence.
- Establishment of Gurukul Kangdi at Haridwar.
- Mahrishi Dayanand Saraswati Universities at Ajmer & Rohtak.
- DAV schools & colleges all over India.
- Gurukuls for Vedic research scholars.
- Orphanages, more than 150 being run all over the country.
- Promotion of widow remarriage.
- Eradication of untouchability.
- Movements against Superstitions.
- Movements against Build-beliefs.

Sixty Years Of Arya Samaj At Gandhidham:

Established by late Shir Laljibhai Gohil in 1954, it was joined by youngsters in 1986. Since then, Arya Samaj Gandhidham, got an impetus and became a model Arya Samaj in India due to constantly increasing activities and relief work done during natural calamities. Arya Samaj is one of the most prestigious social and voluntary organizations in Gujarat State.
The joining of youngsters in 1986 started the success story of Arya Samaj Gandhidham, attaining the present status from nothing in 1986. Today Arya Samaj Gandhidham is India's role model and constantly active Arya Samaj. Arya Samaj Gandhidham is celebrating its 60th year of inception.

Before the devastating earthquake of 26th January, 2001 Arya Samaj Gandhidham was totally dependent on local donations for all its activities. After Earthquake, seeing the organized way in which work was being done by Arya Samaj Gandhidham, national and international community has started donating in a large way and helping them in all their projects. They are now successfully running Jeevan Prabhat in Pondicherry for the Tsunami affected children. This project is being funded by Arya Pratindhi Sabha America.

“Whenver we hear the word Arya Samaj we always think of a place where Havan and marriages are performed. This is the conceptualized vision of Arya Samaj for the past century. This is not the fault of the general public but it is the utter negligence on the part of Arya Samajs right across the country that people are now thinking on these lines. Something should be done to change this mentality,”¹ says Gurudutt Sharma, the Vice President of Arya Samaj, Gandhidham.

All will agree that Arya Samaj Gandhidham is an exception in the light of above stated statement. Those who have visited Gandhidham Arya Samaj will know the significance of its being. And the reason behind this is a Non-Gujarati named Mr. Vachonidhi Arya who has devoted his whole life for the betterment of Gandhidham Arya Samaj.

The saga of success started way back in 1986 when the present Hon. Secretary Shri Vachonidhi Arya was invited to take active interest in the activities of Arya Samaj Gandhidham by the then secretary of Arya Samaj Gandhidham Shri Motiram Jeswani, and since then it has been a steady climb to the top. All the officer bearers of Arya Samaj Gandhidham today are youngsters. There is full unity amongst
them and all the major policy decisions are taken jointly. There is no leg pulling but only hand pulling (mutual co-operation) is there. It is collective leadership at its best.

Mr. Vachonidhi Arya

“To see how this is being done I would request you to visit Arga Samaj Gandhidham and there you will see the dream of Rishi Dayanand being realized. This modern day Arya Samaj still follows the path shown by Rishi, but they are also moving ahead with the times and as per the teachings of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, they are also reformists and are doing a lot of social work. Arya Samaj Gandhidham has truly moved into the 21st century. For this we have to thank our team of young office bearers,” says Mr. Gurudutt Sharma, the Vice President of Arya Samaj Gandhidham.

Arya Samaj Gandhidham is connected to the world using telephones, fax and e-mails. The office is fully computerized and most of the work is done on computers. Arya Samaj Gandhidham has kept pace with the development in the world and at the
same time not forgotten or left behind its traditions. It is truly following the guidelines given by Swami Dayanand Saraswati.

Today one can say with full pride that Arya Samaj Gandhidham is the leading and model Arya Samaj of not only India but of the world. Their activities cover all the areas of social service. They not only follow the values dictated by Swami Dayanand Saraswati, but strictly adhere to the teaching of the holy Vedas.

At present they have many philanthropic projects going on, the chief being:

- “Jeevan Prabhat” (an orphanage cum widow home for the earthquake affected):

  The meaning of this name itself tells us that this is a new dawn in the lives of those children who lost everything in the earthquake of 26th January 2001. Here these children are being brought up like their own children without any distinction of caste & creed. A permanent complex for these children is being constructed at an estimated cost of Rs. 3 Crore, and at present they have 140 kids with them. These children are being brought up in the most modern way. Here they are served nutritious diet and sent to schools to study and become good citizens. They are also taught about our culture and one feels proud in saying that these children can perform a Havan on their own. They now consider “Jeevan Prabhat” as their home. “Jeevan Prabhat” is so unique that is has changed the concept of rearing orphans. The children are being moulded into real human beings.

- Vedic Sanskar Kendra (A multi utility complex):

  This multi utility complex has been constructed at a cost of Rs. 1 core and was inaugurated by the then Hon’ble Deputy Prime Minister of India Shri L K Advani. This complex has been constructed with a view to provide research facility for Vedic Scholars and will also have a fully computerized library of IAS aspirants. At present the 140 children of “Jeevan Prabhat” are staying in this complex.
Kachchh District medical Oxygen Bank:

This bank is being run since 1998 and has proved to be very beneficial during many emergency cases. It is open for 24 hours and has a stock of 100 cylinders. During the warlike situation even the Indian army had approached Arya Samaj Gandhidham for the use of this bank and as Arya Samaj is a patriotic organization it had immediately expressed its willingness to leave the bank at the disposal of the Indian army.

Rishi Udyan (A modern garden for the children):

This garden is under construction just across the road to “Jeevan Prabhat” complex. This will not be just any other garden but an ultra modern garden with fountains, lighting, flowers and grass and play ground equipment for the children. There will also be a herbal section where the rare ayurvedic herbs will be grown and taken care of.

Dayananad Vidyalaya (A School):

A good school is required for the children and that is why Arya Samaj Gandhidham is constructing this school so that all the children of “Jeevan Prabhat” get standard education and there is a saving in paying the school fees.

These are the projects which Arya Samaj Gandhidham is having in hand at present. They also carry out many activities, like the performing of 16 Sanskars, every year two yoga camps are held and also they run permanent yoga classes. To develop the personality of the children, Elocution competitions are held and also for children’s personality development, camps are held every year. Here the children are taught various things related with personality development. Over and above these many other activities are carried out for the benefit of mankind in general. Arya Samaj Gandhidham is connected to the world via Internet.

Arya Samaj Gandhidham is always there to carry out relief work in the aftermath of any calamity be it the cyclone of 1998 or the devastating earthquake of
2001 in the dark history of grief stricken Kachchhi people. In the aftermath of the earthquake of 26th January 2001, Arya Samaj carried out extension rescue/relief operations on large scale. Over 2.5 Crore Rupees worth relief material received in the form of 112 trucks from inland and 32 containers from abroad were distributed in the entire Kachchh district. For four months mess was run to feed hundreds of homeless people. Over 1000 dead bodies were recovered from the debris and their last rites were performed with ghee and havan samagri with the recital of Vedic mantras. Mobile doctor's team, structural engineers’ team etc. also rendered their services.

Arya Samaj Gandhidham is already the leading Non Governmental Organization of this area and many of its activities have become trend setters. Arya Samaj Gandhidham is constantly on the move and is setting new standards in all it does.

➤ Personality Development And Arya Samaj Gandhidham :

“Good personality is essential for success and for achieving anything in life. In these modern times if one wants to achieve anything, good co-ordination of the mind and body is very very essential. One should know how to present oneself to end up as a winter. Arya Samaj Gandhidham is very active in this field. Many different personality development activities are organized throughout the year, the prime being Yoga Camps, Yoga Classes, Elocution competitions, children's personality development camps, running a rich library, Arya Vir Dal Training.” says Deepak Bhatt, one of the members of Arya Samaj Gandhidham. And these are as follows;

➤ Yoga Camp:

Two Yoga & Meditation camps are held every year so that people learn to cope up with the stress & strain of the hectic daily life and also become physically fit. The first of these camps is held in January under the guidance of Acharya Arya Nareshji of Udgith Sadhna Sthal Himachal Pardesh and the second is held in the last week of May under the guidance of Dr.
Ishwar Bhardwajji, Head of the Department of Yoga and Human Sciences Gurukul Kangdi University Haridwar.

➢ Yoga Classes:

To make people continue the practice of what they have learnt in the two Yoga camps they have now started daily yoga classes. They have appointed a full time yoga teacher who has master’s degree in Yoga from Gurukul Kangdi University, Haridwar.

➢ Elocution Competition:

A district level elocution competition ranging from primary to college level is organized every year so that the student participants get experience in the art of public speaking and develop rational thinking and can become good decision makers.

➢ Children's Personality Development Camp:

During the summer vacation the children are free and as they have hardly anything constructive to do or no way of spending their time, they end wasting their time in vain. In the present day competitive education syllabus, the child is left with no time for these types of extra-curricular activities. Therefore Arya Samaj Gandhidham organizes the Children's Personality Development Camps during the summer holidays so that many children can benefit from them. All children between the ages of 10-18 years can participate in these camps. Total 4 camps are organized every year.

➢ In these camps the children are taught various things like:

Self Presentation, Good Manners, How to avoid addiction, Yoga & Meditation for Physical and Mental Self Presentation, Good Manners, How to avoid addiction, Yoga and Meditation for Physical and Mental development, Sanskrit, Stress Management, Development of Public Speaking Skills,
Patriotism, How to increase memory power. Experts from various fields teach and imbibe these virtues in the children.

- **Rich Library:**

  A rich library and reading rooms are being maintained for the general public so that they can have the benefit of reading rare and expensive books and increase their knowledge. They have about 1000 books covering various subjects. When the “Jeevan Prabhat” complex is completed and the children shift there they will be starting a computerized library for IAS & IPS aspirants who are poor and cannot afford the costly books and study material required. Books for post graduation students will also be made available, for it is their endeavor that a poor child should not remain uneducated for want of study material.

- **AryaVir Dal Training:**

  Daily training sessions are held for the young ones where they are taught as to how to remain physically fit and a core group is ready for any type of social work. Under this they will also be starting Adult Education classes and Sanskrit Classes for the children in the near future. Over and above these activities are also building the lives of the earthquake affected children of “Jeevan Prabhat”. “We also teach arts and martial arts to the children so that they can secure themselves from the threats,” say the member.

**Current Activities Of Arya Samaj Gandhidham :**

- Jeevan Prabhat Gandhidham
- Jeevan Prabhat Pondicherry
- Children's Personality Development Camps
- Ayurvedic Medicines Counter
- Reaching the world through web site
- Rich Library
Jeevan Prabhat - Building Future of the Nation:

Gujarat and especially Kachchh were struck by a devastating earthquake on 26th January 2001. They wanted to do something for the society and hence they started Jeevan Prabhat for those children who had lost everything including their most valuable asset Parents.

Jeevan Prabhat was set up with the intention to usher in a new dawn in the lives of their children so that they would no longer be orphans but Arya Samaj and the whole society would now be their parents which is their motto and principle. They are proud to say that they have fulfilled the objective and target which they had set when they started Jeevan Prabhat on the third day i.e. on 29th January 2001.

Salient Features of Jeevan Prabhat:

- They are rearing these children without the distinction of class, creed or religion; all the children are given same food, clothes and education. On seeing these children one cannot tell their Religion or Caste.
- Just by seeing the faces of these children one can come to know of the happiness in their hearts, this is because these children are never made to wash utensils or clothes or made to clean the premises which is regular practice in many other orphanages.
- Only new clothes are given to the children. They do not accept old clothes for them.
- These children are never served and leftover food from and parties, receptions etc.
They celebrate the birthday of each and every child every year. As is the practice in all the local schools these children also distribute chocolates to their classmates. The child is given a new dress as a birthday present.

They have their own gaushala (dairy) so that the children get pure milk to drink.

Each and every child is sent to school. They have also employed six teachers to help children with their studies after they come back from school. Apart from extra studies and their homework these teachers also keep an eye and help them with extra-curricular activities.

To boost the morale of the children and also their self confidence they never allow them to think of themselves as poor or lesser children.

Of the total budget 35% is spent on education and extra-curricular activities.

They never ask the school to waive fees instead they ask donors to sponsor the education of the children.

The campus is spread in 4 acres of land and the building has all the amenities and is airy, neat and functional, on entering the premises anyone will be able to see the handicrafts and paintings made by the children displayed everywhere. There is also a well maintained garden for the children. The premise is approximately one lac sq. feet constructed at an estimated cost Rs. 8 Crore. The complex and the garden have a total of about 400 neem trees and 3000 other plants and trees.

There is a computer class, library & reading room, music room a meditation room, a room for indoor games and also a room for extracurricular activities and handicrafts.

They have all types of staff to take care of the children. On an average there is one staff member for every five children.

These children take part in many competitions and extra-curricular activities and also win many prizes.

There is a fixed time table for the children to follow. The children get up at 5.30 am and go to sleep at 9.00 pm. Apart from modern education, moral values are also imbibed in them.

All the guests visiting the children are given accommodation on the campus so that they can observe the children and be there continuously during their stay. They have made good air-conditioned rooms for the guests.
Jeevan Prabhat is giving employment to 40 people and thus is helping 40 families.

The children are given all types of variety food to eat. Year around many parties are organized by different people in the Jeevan Prabhat Complex and the children are also invited to many parties and receptions. No dish or preparation is untasted by them and they do not yearn for any food.

The children are taken for small picnics regularly and once a year in May - June they are taken for a 5-6 day picnic.

The children are allowed to watch TV and for only 45 minutes a day and that too only selected channels.

To keep watch on the children they have installed CCTV in the whole campus.

The children are brought up as industrious and totally disciplined. Apart from book knowledge they are also imbibing in the moral values, making them self confident and making them patriotic.

Every organization issues receipts for the financial donation received by them but they issue receipts for even for donations received in kind and also ensure that they are distributed properly to the children.

The whole management is transparent. Daily about 40 types of records are maintained and checked.

They have taken the responsibility of the boys till they are able to stand on their own feet and that of the girls till their marriage. Arya Samaj will also bear the responsibility of the marriage of the girls.

The children have met many National level personalities and taken their blessings.

The I.Q. level of the children is good and they are full of self-confidence. They are sure these children will be model citizens of Mother India and bring laurels.

They are all sad that these children are orphans but in case their parents were alive, these children would not have reached the level they have attained after their admission in Jeevan Prabhat. In case they had not taken the responsibility of these children then they would have become loafers and spend their lives doing nothing and may have fallen prey to anti-social ailments.
Today they are rearing these children with definite goals. They all know how difficult it is to rear two children at home. With constant attention and care they are polishing these raw diamonds which is a 24 hour year round work. All the members, office bearers and staff of Arya Samaj have taken up this challenging task of rearing these children. Donors from all over the world are also contributing for this gigantic task.

They do not take any Government grant nor do they have any fixed-deposits so that they can run on the interest. They are totally dependent on donations. They do not go from house asking for donations. The total expenditure of Jeevan Prabhat is more than Rs. 10000 per day.

As everybody is aware that 26th January 2001, India's 52nd Republic day dawned bright & clear, but precisely at 8.46, it turned into the blackest day of the history as a devastating earthquake shook the very foundation of the whole Gujarat state and in the process rendered thousands homeless and thousands dead, many of them widows and orphans. This earthquake caused wide spread destruction in Kachchh. It left misery and tears in its wake. Relief aid came from all over the world, but was mainly concentrated to temporary shelters and food. The team members also worked to provide all possible help and also thought of providing long team assistance to the society. They felt that widows and orphans were the most affected but least attended section. They immediately planned a project at a cost of Rs. 3 Crore to provide them a permanent shelter with all possible help to boost their morale, rehabilitate and shape up their future to make them self sufficient, and thus they started an orphanage and aptly named it “Jeevan Prabhat” for as the name signifies, it is really a new dawn in the lives of these earthquake orphans and widows.

In “Jeevan Prabhat” the children are brought up like their own children. They do not accept old clothes for the children but like their children at home these children also wear only new clothes. The children get the best nutritious food and no leftover food is served to them. They are given a daily diet which is rich in vitamins, proteins and minerals. The menu has been specially formulated so that all the requirements of a growing child are met. The children also attend private schools and they pay their
fees regularly so that they do not get the inferiority complex that they are alone in this world. At present they have 140 kids with them.

The main objectives of “Jeevan Prabhat” are:

- To rehabilitate 250 orphan children & 50 widows affected by earthquake.
- To give permanent shelter to the children & widows without distinction of caste or creed and free of cost.
- To develop these children as good human beings with full-self respect, strong determination, sound moral character and will power to meet any challenge in life.
- To treat the children as their own and never as orphans.
- To take the responsibility of the all round development of the children.
- To take the responsibility of boys till they are capable of facing life (till they are 18 years of age).
- To take the responsibility of girls till their marriage.
- To be helpful to them even after they leave “Jeevan Parbhat” and enter in the realities of the world.
- To provide self employment to the widows.
- To develop self respect, patriotism and culture in these children.

Such is the quality of their work that when the then Governor of Gujarat Shri Kailashpati Mishra came to inaugurate the IDRF-Boys' wing of the “Jeevan Prabhat” complex on 17th December 2003 and when he saw the way the children were being brought up he said,

“Remove the word Orphanage from the Dictionary”

The children have been host to many important persons and have also gone as guests of many important persons. When the children went to Delhi in May 2003 among the many dignitaries, they met the then Hon'ble President of India Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam and also the then Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayeeji and the Prime Minister was so moved by the story of the plight of the
children during the earthquake and by the way the children had progressed since they joined “Jeevan Prabhat” that he immediately declared a donation of Rs. 56 Lac from the Prime Minister National Relief Fund for the construction of the Girls wing of the “Jeevan Prabhat” complex. Same is the care of Dr. Vinod Prakash, the President of Indian Development of Relief Fund USA.

Initially IDRF had given them only Rs. 12.5 Lacs towards the construction of the “Jeevan Prabhat” complex. Then Dr. Vinod Prakash visited them in December 2002 and he was so impressed by the progress of the children and by the way they were being taken care of that subsequently IDRF (Indian Development & Relief Fund) has already donated more than Rs. 80 Lac for the “Jeevan Prabhat” project.

Some details about the “Jeevan Prabhat” complex:

- Project Cost:
  This Modern Complex with all facilities has come up to the cost of Rs. 3 Crore, and they had already received about Rs. 2 Crore as donations to inaugurate. Anand Vahara & Associates, Architects, Interior Designers & Vastu Consultants from Vadodra have designed this modern complex.

- Land:
  Kandla Port Trust has allotted the required 2 acres of land for “Jeevan Prabhat” at Rs. 1/-token in Dayanand Nagar, (Sector-7), Gandhidham, The then Minister of law Shri Arun Jaitley and Hon. Minister of Shipping Shri Ved Prakash Goyal laid the foundation stone on 15/09/2001. Capt. Deoratna Arya (President-International Aryan league) was the chief guest.

- Facilities:
  The complex consists of 66 rooms for the boys and girls. There are separate rooms with attached bathrooms for the widows. There are Office, library, Health Clinic, Garden & Gymnasium, Handicrafts Centre, Computer Centre, IQ Section, Hobby Workshop, Conference Hall, and Meditation Hall etc. Some of their recurring
expenses are listed below. And a request was also made to be kind enough to join hands with them for any of these heads.

- **Food:** They spend nearly Rs. 600/- per child per month for a balanced diet.
- **Nutrition:** To provide nutritious items they spend Rs. 700/- per child per month.
- **Clothes:** Their conservation estimate for the clothes of one child is Rs. 300/- per child per month.
- **Education:** Their expense for one child is Rs. 2000/- per year.
- **Medical:** Their average medical expenses per child per month comes to about Rs. 100/.
- **Maintenance:** For the maintenance of the facilities they incur an expense of Rs. 400- per child per month.

### Some Ideal Donations of Non-Gujaratis to help the native orphans:

They receive donations from all over the world for the children, but some of them are very touching and trendsetters. In one of the interviews, the Mahamantri of Arya Samaj Gandhidham, Mr. Vachonidhi Arya expresses his gratitude:

> “We hereby express our heartfelt gratitude to them and to all our donors for helping us in this mammoth task of rearing parentless children of Kachchh.”

Many of the Non-Gujarati people took active interest in saving the lives of the orphans from becoming the disaster. The gratitude of Mr. Vachonidhi Arya is found in his own words as stated below:

- **About Shri Girish Khosla:**

> “We are unable to find words to describe what Khoslaji has done for the children of Jeevan Prabhat; in fact he has adopted the whole project. He is constantly striving to get help for the children. Recently
he has got printer profile of the children and is now canvassing for sponsors for the children. He has dedicated the rest of his life for these children and the children are indeed lucky to have him as their father. He comes to India every year and spends at least one month with the children and giving them his love & affection. After the earthquake of 26/01/2001 when Khoslaji saw that our rescue and relief work was hampered due to unavailability of a vehicle he immediately collected funds from USA and donated us a brand new Qualis Car.”

Regarding Dr. Deen B Chandora & Dr. Sarita Singh:

“Under the auspices of Greater Atlanta Vedi Temple and with the help of Arya Veer Dal they organized a fund collection drive and they washed cars to collect funds for the children of Jeevan Prabhat and they collected USD 3803/-, which they have sent as a gift for the children and have also promised to collect more funds in the future.”

About Dr. Vinod Prakash:

“The President of IDRF-USA Dr. Vinod Prakash and his wife Mrs. Sarla Prakash had recently held a welcoming ceremony for their grand children. In the invitation card they asked their guests to give gifts in the form of cheques payable to IDRF which in turn would be sent to Arya Samaj Gandhidham for the children of “Jeevan Prabhat”. They have sent us the collection including their own contribution amounting to Rs.1.25 Lac. It is a tradition in their family to donate whatever gifts they receive on any occasion for any noble cause.”

Regarding Shri Shashi Bhushan Arya:

“He belongs to Shetalmanja Devariya (Uttar Pardesh). He saves Rs. 1 per day and sends the savings for the children of Jeevan Prabhat. The amount may be small but it is the good intention and the heart to do something for the underprivileged. These are but just the tip of the
iceberg. There are many such noble persons who give something or the other as per their capacity for the children of Jeevan Prabhat. There are many more noble people like the above few who are constantly helping us by their financial and moral support and by inspiring other noble persons like them to donate for the children.«9

Some facts about Jeevan Prabhat:

- Employment Generation:
  The need of the nation at present is to give employment to as many people as possible. Jeevan Prabhat is also doing its bit in this. Jeevan Prabhat provides employment to 32 needy persons and thereby indirectly they are supporting 32 families.

- Expenses:
  So far they have spent Rs. 1.5 Crore for the rearing of the children of Jeevan Prabhat, this is because they treat the children like their own and always give them new things and clothes and they get good nutritious food to eat.

- Commercial Use:
  Arya Samaj Gandhidham is totally dependent on donations for the rearing of the children. They are proud to say that they do not make any commercial use of their properties and there is no income generation activity which would help them in the rearing of these children. All these and people’s moral and financial support has helped “Jeevan Prabhat” in becoming a model orphanage, for which they are forever indebted to all who have contributed and a request is also made by the President to continue the valuable support in the years to come.

Mahrshi Dayanand Saraswati was a champion of good health. He said that to develop this nation the youth should be healthy. Sound health is the basis of any development. A weak person is a liability to the society. In keeping with this doctrine Arya Samaj Gandhidham is constantly active for the healthy life of the citizens of Gandhidham.
They also organize quarterly medical camps for the underprivileged and financially backward sections of the society. In these camps, services of specialists are made available, and the required medicine is distributed free of cost. Free post camp follows up are also provided by these doctors. Many people take advantage of these camps.

“To provide good quality Ayurvedic medicines to the people of Gandhidham we have recently started stocking and selling Ayurvedic medicines manufactured by Gurukul Kangadi Pharmacy. This pharmacy is 100 years old and they maintain strict quality standards,” says Mr. Deepak Patel, one of the members of Arya Samaj Gandhidham.

As discussed earlier, they also organize two Yoga camps every year. The camps are conducted by Dr. Ishwar Bharadwajji, Head of the department, Human Consciousness and Yogic Science, Gurukul Kangri University Haridwar. These camps are organized so that the native Kachchhi people of this area can be benefited and enjoy good health and also as a follow up so that the people do not forget what they have learnt in the camps, daily yoga classes have been started.

During the summer vacation the children are free and as they have hardly anything constructive to do or no way of spending their time, they end dissipating their time in vain. In the present day competitive education syllabus, the child is left with no time for these types of extracurricular activities. They have also started a health centre at Vedic Sanskar Kendra which caters to the medical needs of the people of this area. There is also a Drug De-addiction centre there. They also provide the services of a modern Ambulance to the city of Gandhidham-Kachchh.
The Then CM of Gujarat, Mr. Narendra Modi With The Children of Jeevan Prabhat

The Then President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam With The Children of Jeevan Prabhat
YMCA Mission In Contemporary Indian :

The Young Men's Christian Association of India (YMCA) seeks to unite men, women, youth and the children as coworkers with God to promote mutually caring, loving and humane communities. Accordingly, the YMCA participates in God's mission of restoring abundant life of all, with special concern for the most distressed and dehumanized in the country. The Indian YMCA is committed to strive for a just society where oppression, exploitation and denial of life is confronted and transformed. It believes in the sanctity of all life and preservation of all God's creation. It stands for renewal and reconciliation in broken communities.

The Paris Basic expresses that Christ is the centre of the movement, which is conceived as a world-wide fellowship uniting Christians of all confessions. It is consistent with an open membership policy, involving people irrespective of faith as well as age, sex, race and social conditions. The basic is not designed to serve as condition of individual YMCA membership, which is deliberately left to the discretion of the constituent movements of the World Alliance. The basis makes clear that the constituent movements of the Alliance have full freedom to express their purpose in other terms designed to correspond more directly to the needs and aspirations of those whom they are seeking to serve provided these are regarded by the World Alliance as being consistent with Paris Basis.

Recognizing the character of the YMCAs in the world today, this act of acknowledging the Paris Basis places upon the various associations and their members as fellow workers with God such imperatives as:

- To work for equal opportunity and justice for all.
- To work for and maintain an environment in which relationship among the people are characterized by love and understanding.
- To work for and maintain conditions. Within YMCA and in society, its organizations and institutions which allows for honesty, depth and creativity.
- To develop and maintain leadership programme patterns which exemplify the various varieties depth of Christian experience.
To work for the development of the whole person.

**YMCA Gandhidham:**

YMCA Gandhidham was established in the year 1991. It is registered under the Public Trust Act, with Charity commissioner, and is affiliated to the National Council of YMCAs of India. This is a recognized agency of the Govt. of Gujarat. The Board of Directors of YMCA Gandhidham consists of a dedicated group of people from Govt., Semi Govt. officers, Processionals, Entrepreneurs and Social workers. In partnership with Gujarat State AIDS Control Society (GSACS) YMCA Gandhidham is running six AIDS related projects in Gandhidham, Kandla, Adipur and surrounding areas. They have taken up several development/social outreach programmes for the youth, the marginalized and the underprivileged. In response to the cyclone, droughts, and earthquake in Kachchh, YMCA took up effective relief and rehabilitation work. Even in the aftermath of the Tsunami in South India, their relief operation was well appreciated.

- **HIV-Aids Related Activities**

  YMCA Gandhidham pioneered preventive and intervention projects against the HIV-AIDS in Kachchh District, Some of the more important projects under this programme are the following:

- **Commercial Sex Workers (CSW) Project**

  In December 1999 YMCA had entered into an agreement with GSACS and undertook a need assessment study on HIV- AIDS lasting six months. Later, in partnership with the State Govt. they launched the first Targeted Intervention Project (TIP) among Commercial sex workers, called CSW project. CSW Projects is now in its 5th year of successful targeted intervention. Project Manager, Project Officer, Accountant, Counselor and three outreach workers constitute the project team.

  The project objective is to reduce HIV/AIDS infections and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) among High Risk Behavior (HRB) people. The targeted area covers Gandhidham, Kandla, Adipur and surrounding places. Counseling sex
workers on safe sex practices, through use of condoms, STI treatment and bringing about behavioral change are the results of the project.

“Appreciating this work, State Government Authorities permitted a Drop Centre at Ram Baug Govt. hospital-Gandhidham. The Drop in Centre is catering to the counseling of HIV/AIDS patients,” says the Secretary, YMCA Gandhidham.

➢ Truckers and Cleaners Project (T&C)

Because of Kandla Port, Special Economic Zone and related industrial activities, large number of trucks and other heavy vehicles visit Kandla and Gandhidham. Evidently, truck drivers and the associated community of cleaners, mechanics, etc. constitute the most vulnerable section of the society to HIV/AIDS infections. Their forced stay away from their families is the reason for their vulnerability to HIV infections. Having indentified this place as a high risk area in HIV infections for truck drivers and cleaners, YMCA started need assessment of a project especially for the truckers and cleaners in October 2001, and Targeted intervention started in April 2002. The T&C project is in the fourth year of interventions, covering Gandhidham, Anjar and Kandla areas of the District.

“Goal of the project is spreading awareness on HIV/AIDS, other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI), and reducing the transmission of HIV/AIDS infection by changing high-risk behavior of the target group,” says the Secretary.

The Project has four main components of intervention, namely, condom promotion, STI treatment, Behavioral Change, Communication and Enabling Environment. Staff includes a Project Manager, Project Officer, Accountant, Counselor and three outreach workers.

➢ Vocational Training Centre (VTC)

Vocational Training Centre is a unique project started by YMCA Gandhidham with financial aid from Y-CARE International. The main objective is:
➢ To educate the community, particularly people at the lower strata of the community for their capacity building and develop skills to get gainful employment.

➢ To train housewives so that they can support the family and have an additional income.

➢ To rehabilitate the school dropouts in developing skills to find their livelihood.

➢ To rehabilitate commercial sex workers and their family members as part of our behavioral change programme and to impart technical skill to people living with HIV/AIDS so that they can earn their living respectfully.

Present activities include computer education, stitching / sewing / embroidery / handicrafts etc. there are plans to include other trades like carpentry, plumbing etc.

➢ Disaster Management Resource Centre (DMRC)

This is an off- shoot of YMCA’s earlier activities in combating natural calamities. A separate office with a full time project office is working for DMRC. They have organized Core Committee Meetings with a networking of NGOs, Governmental and trade representatives, and commercial bodies to make a task force to face calamities. DMRC has organized orientation programmes, exposure visits and initiated partnership with other live - minded organizations and NGOs. They actively took part in the recent Tsunami relief operations in Colacheal, Tamil Nadu. Future programmes involve formation of an Accident Care unit along with the existing programmes like, Control room, Data warehouse, Training Centre, Networking.

➢ Health And Environment Projects Being Launched By Their Women Cell

Their dedicated women cell has recently launched a project in consultation with local authorities towards cleanliness and environmental improvement of the city. This includes programme for cleaning selected pockets of the city with involvement of local people and planting trees.

➢ School AIDS Education Programme (SAEP)

As part of the awareness programme, this project work among school children has been started with special trained staff under the supervision of the State Govt. Agency’s Sixty two Schools in Gandhidham, Anjar and Bhuj are involved with them
in this programme. School visits are encouraged to conduct sensitization programme on HIV/AIDS at regular intervals.

Regular follow-up action with school includes essay competitions, drawing/poster competition, quiz, debate, street play and role-play, letter writing, question box, all related to the SAEP initiative of sensitizing the students about the threat and destructive character of HIV infections, especially on teenagers.

➢ Enabling Environment Projects

These projects were targeted mainly in the intervention of HIV-AIDS infected persons and CSWs. Its objectives were to create an enabling environment among them and organize programmes through training and other areas of need to attain long term self sustainability and alternate incomes sources especially among the CSWs.

“ABHAY' A Home for the children in vulnerable situations :

This is a culmination of Commercial Sex Workers and Enabling Environment Projects. The house is constituted to provide community-friendly, institutional care and support to vulnerable children living in fearful, insecure and vulnerable surroundings. Presently they have only children of commercial sex workers under the “Abhay” umbrella. With large support base on sustainable basis they will be in a position to include children from other sectors like street children and ultimately children infected and /or orphaned by AIDS. The last mentioned segment is the most vulnerable and an exclusive environment provided with special medical, educational and health care centre are essential for this. Experience showed that schools especially are reluctant to accept HIV infected children due to the stigma attached to these unfortunate children. This is much larger and challenging task which requires higher levels of investment and a detailed action plan.

The house started functioning from 1st June 2004. The children are under the care of a housemother and guidance of professional social workers who ensure qualitative care for the children's health and their education. Presently they are having
10 children. The House is run with financial assistance from YMCA Gandhidham members and well wishers.

“Though the YMCA started in 1844 in London and has spread in over 130 countries, with India having over 600 of them affiliated or in the process, Gandhidham is just crossing over from its “teens”. Started in 1991, it has crossed several milestones already,”\textsuperscript{15} lists the Secretary:

- Registered under BPT & Charity in June 1993
- Affiliated to the National Council of YMCAs of April 1994
- Inaugurated Vocational Training Centre in 2003
- “Abhay” for Children in difficult situations in May 2004
- HIV Awareness, Prevention, Care & Support programmers/projects in partnership with GSACS such as Sex Workers Intervention (1999), Truckers & Cleaners Intervention (2001), School AIDS Education Programme (SAEP)(2002), and UNDPS’S Enabling Environment Research (2003), Sex Workers (2003), PLHA (2003) and Mobile Medical Clinic (2003) with support from Dorabji Tata Trust, Mumbai.
- Sports & Games-Badminton, TT, Chess, Carom, Volleyball and well equipped Fitness Centre with the latest cardio equipment.
- In keeping with YMCA’s famous equilateral triangle as its monogram, balanced approach to life by providing programmes for enrichment of Body, Mind and Spirit through commitment to serve the needy community, so as to grow through service addressing issues of Justice, Peace & Environment.
Some Major Programmes & Activities Presently Available:

- Volleyball (Soon to be Basketball, Korfball, Lawn Tennis & Squash Court) - Outdoors
- Music - Drums, Keyboard & Guitar
- Confidence Through English Proficiency, Public Speaking Etiquette & Good Manners and Finishing Courses
- Summer / Vacations Specials - Adventure, Day Campus, Course in Painting, Calligraphy, Skating
- Dance Classes - HIP-HOP, LOCKING & POPING, WESTERN, BOLLOWOOD STYLE, B BOING & BHANGRA
- Computer Classes - Basic, Tally, Internet, Games & Graphics
- Guest Rooms - Clean, Modestly furnished & friendly - A/c, Non A/c Dormitories.
Cultural Activities Conducted at YMCA Gandhidham

**Some Major Social Endeavours On The Anvil Of The YMCA Gandhidham:**

- Animal Birth Control & Anti Rabies (ABC-AR) Drive In Kachchh District, Gujarat:

  It is a well established fact that while the stray dogs living in the streets and by lanes of the Cities, are territorial by habitation and do not migrate, they also breed seasonally multiplying at a role of about six times the number. The dogs do provide a cheap security of sorts to the residents of the area who in turn feed them. But the relationship gets complicated when one considers the number of disadvantages that comes with it. The major worry comes with the likely Spread of the deadly disease called 'rabies' which can spread through saliva of mad or rabies infected dogs. The human beings infected by rabies have to undergo series of injections and treatment to save them from definite death. The dogs are also carriers of the infections and their skin as well as their body system which may not affect them but can affect other animals and humans. Besides there are several issues of safety hazards, accidents due to straying or turning animal on the road and common sight to see dogs chasing vehicles when a highly risky for two wheeler orders and cyclists, as they risk falling down in panic or due to imbalance.
Objectives to be achieved:

i. To achieve sterilized stray/street dogs population of 45,000 over the next three years by sterilization males and females.

ii. To achieve a target of 15,000 operations per annum with a team of two doctors, four paramedical assistants and eight dog catching squad members and two drivers (largest the teams shorter the time).

iii. To control spread of rabies through dogs in the District of Kachchh.

iv. To make streets safe from dog bites, dog chases and reduce overall vulnerability of citizens and improve the overall health and wellbeing of citizens,

v. To reduce cruelty to animals.

vi. New annexes building for youth excellence centre & community training.

vii. Road traffic improvement curbing loss of limb, life & property with pollution control measures through drop out and unemployed youth.

viii. Reduction of plastic use drive.

ix. Inter school football tournament for under 17

x. Open chess tournament

xi. Mr. YMCA Gandhidham at Kachchh level-a body building event

xii. Quarterly Newsletter that goes to International, National & local contacts & Agencies.

Recently they visited Sathyam Mission School. The Youth Forum Green Club OF YMCA Gandhidham celebrated 170 years founders’ day of YMCA with the orphans of Satyam Mission School. On this happy occasion cloths, fun and games were distributed with equal measure. All the kids signed the Stand up for youth challenge. To also make environment day meaningful, the kids were briefed on the topic of recycling and in turn they took an oath to keep themselves and their surroundings clean and help preserve the Environment.
Veerayatan Vidyapith:

Veerayatan is an International organization which is devoted to the noble cause of serving the Society. The prime motto of it is,

“Service to Mankind
Is Service to God.”

By keeping this motto in centre, the organization has devoted its activities towards the welfare of the society only. Without considering caste, religion or sex, it has been working selflessly for the rightful development of society. In the building of New Society, rather righteous society this organization has skillfully & beautifully blended Science & Religion and developed a whole new theory for the society.

With the blessings of Shri Amar Muniji Maharaj, Acharya Shri Chandanji established Veerayatan in Bihar in 1973 that has been serving selflessly for the betterment of the society and beautifying the atmosphere of education. The manifold objectives of the organization are as under:

- Character building through cultural education.
- Preparing the youth for global challenges.
- Renaissance to be able to serve the society.
- Nurturing the secularism and working for balancing the environment.
- Innovating & exploring the new horizons through experimental techniques.

Arrival in Kachchh:

The hearts of Sadhvis of Veerayatan throbbed when they witnessed the sufferings of Earthquake stricken Kachchhi people of 26th January, 2001. Then at once rushed to Kachchh to help the needy people and participated actively in rebuilding of Kachchh after devastating attack of Earthquake. They opened various professional training centers and schools on temporary basis and thus became the partners of grief stricken people in their grief. After observing an inevitable need to set up some permanent resolution to heartily help the needy in Kachchh, Veerayatan let open a
permanent Educational Institution. It started a revolution in the field of education holding the power of the great noble cause, morality and spirituality. Veerayatan has instilled in the students the ancient morality which encourages them to lead a better way of life.

**Educational Institutions in Veerayatan Vidyapeeth :**

- Primary and Secondary Schools (Gujarati Medium)
- Primary School (English Medium)
- Health Care Centre
- Professional / Vocational Training Centre P.L.D
- Pharmacy College (B.Pharm, M.Pharm)
- B.B.A. & B.C.A. College
- Mechanical Engineering
- Civil Engineering
- Electronics & Communication Engineering
- Information Technology Engineering
- Computer Engineering
- Master of Business Administration
- Master of Mechanical Engineering
- Master of Civil Engineering
- Diploma in Mechanical Engineering
- Diploma in Civil Engineering

**Need for Industrial & Vocational Education in Kachchh:**

In India, a number of the most promising young persons is the highest. This number equals the number of the most promising young persons of the U.S.A & the Europe. These young ones should be capable enough to lift the national economy and prestige. Only 14% of the youth gets to reach the highest education desired. It has not developed because the youth residing in the villages do not get chance of higher education. And thus their hidden potential cannot be used to develop the whole nation. “Veerayatan is firm on bringing higher level education to the needy youth of
the villages and help them become the builders of the nation,” informs Shree Chandanaji.

The achievements of Veerayatan Kachchhi:

After the devastating Earthquake of 2001 in Kachchh of Gujarat, Veerayatan worked for the revival and started educating 10,000 children in schools on a temporary basis. 32 places in Kachchh were selected by Veerayatan which opened many vocational training centres through which 12 thousand people were trained to get employed.

- Through the schemes named “Kids” and “Shrutam”, many children from slum areas were taught the lesson of cleanliness and literacy.
- Socially and financially deprived children of the villages of Kachchh were gifted the primary and secondary school in Jakhaniya (Ta. Mandvi)
- The families who lived in the outskirts areas of Kachchh were benefited by the free primary education in Rudrani village (Bhuj- Kachchh).
- The students of remote villages are provided the modern necessities and facilities, boarding, loading, etc.
- More than 1 lac cattle are provided drinking water.
- Environment friendly tools to provide more than 2000 people at a time the healthy and clean food.
- It has the 10,000,00 square feet building to provide the students all the necessary facilities for better education.
- Direct opportunities of employment to more than 400 people.
Facilities provided at Veerayatan:

- Hostel facility for Boys & Girls with proper surroundings
- Hygienic food provided to the students through modern canteen.
- Modern library, necessary tools and a well organized canteen.
- Generation facility also available for uninterrupted power supply.
- Highly equipped laboratory facilities which are more than 50 in number.
- Various syllabus wise tutorial classes.
- Smart classes providing the facilities of LCD projectors.
- Well equipped computer laboratory and well equipped English language laboratory.
- 24x7 Internet provision and Wi-Fi facility.
- Fully facilitated library having books, reference books, journals, e-journals, etc. provided according to GTU.
- Centralized A.C library.
- Central workshop.
- Healthcare centre in the campus.
- Transportation facilities for the students & the staff.

Revered Acharya Shri Chandanaji, fondly known as Tai Maharaj, is the first Jain Sadhvi to receive the prestigious title of Acharya in the 2500 year old Jain tradition. In a religion where it is strictly prohibited for the renounced class to do any kind of social work, she was the first one to initiate a revolutionary chapter by introducing the concept of Seva (service to humanity) among the Jain Sadhvis (nuns). She inspired and trained the renounced class to actively engage in social work for the betterment of humanity. In 1972, she began her humanitarian work from a poverty-stricken area in the state of Bihar, India. To carry out her mammoth task of selfless service, she founded the organization ‘Veerayatan’. With her vision and perseverance, today Veerayatan is a world renowned leading development organization with centers in more than ten countries. It is a non-profit, non-governmental organization (NGO) working to empower people through Seva (service), Shiksha (Education) and Sadhana (inner development). For the last 42 years, Veerayatan has touched millions of lives and has succeeded in bringing hope and support to them. It aims to support and empower people without discriminating on the grounds of caste, creed, race, religion.
or gender. Thus, Acharya Shri Chandanaji has brought about a positive change in the Jain tradition according to the needs of the time and has paved a new path of Seva. A thinker, scholar, writer, poet and artist, she is well-known both within and outside the Jain community for her revolutionary ideas. She has been honored with many international and national awards for her unparalleled compassion and contribution. An inspirational movie ‘Never Before’ has also been made to commemorate her life.

**Brief Details Of Activities Of Marwari Yuva Manch, Gandhidham :**

Marwari Yuva Manch, Gandhidham is one of the wings of various working Marwari Yuva Manchs across India. It has been serving Gandhidham with its fuller heart since its inception. It has been contributing towards the welfare of Kachchhi people selflessly. While examining the various activities done by the Gandhidham wing, one can guess the importance of its being.

- Objectives of Manch are :
  - It works within a well formulated philosophy designated as ‘Manch Darshan’ having five basic ingredients:
    - Manch Base :
      - Public Service
    - Manch Insight :
      - Social Reform
    - Manch Strength :
      - Individual Development
    - Manch Desire :
      - Social-Dignity and Self Security
    - Manch Goal :
      - National Development & Unity

In nutshell the Philosophy may be explained this way:

- Public Service
  - Manch renders public service irrespective of caste, creed or religion and thus joins the process of nation building, which is its prime goal.
Social Reform

Manch emphasizes on Social Reforms through Self-Reform. Implementation of this theory has got direct bearing on the Manch Goal.

Individual Development:

Manch firmly believes in the theory that strength derives in a person through development of inherent qualities within one’s self; the community derives strength from that of the persons belonging to the community and the nation from the communities within it put together. This theory is again directly related with the Manch goal.

Social Dignity And Self Security:

Manch gives much importance to the concept of Self-discipline and Self-control while desiring Social-dignity and Self-security, which, if not directly, are definitely correlative indirectly and at the same time give equal weight to the Social-dignity and Self-security of others from each of whom it expects the same for itself.

National Development & Unity:

Manch has chosen “National Development & Unity” as its prime goal, as no other alternative paves way for peaceful survival and glory amidst the community of nations on the globe.

A Grand Lokarpan programme had been organized for handing over of 24 houses constructed by Marwari Yuva Manch, Gandhidham to flood affected people of Village Karanpura, Gram Panchayat Chokhola in Tehsil Baytu (Barmer) at site. Minister of State for Home Affairs, Rajasthan Govt. Shri Amraram Choudhry, MLA Baytu Shri Tagaram Choudhry, MLA Siwana Shri Kant, Collector of Barmer Shri Subirkumar, Sarpanch Smt. Meeradevi and donors and guest from Gandhidham were present in Function. Manch incurred more than Rs. 11 Lac for the project. Manch also distributed Household Kitchen utensils, four sets of Steel Khat, Cottan Bed, Bed Sheet, Rajai and Cushion to the affected people. Also a booklet named “Yuva Chetna” has been published on that day which highlighted the work done for the mankind by the Manch. Large number of members was present on the occasion for its grand success.
An Eye cum General Medical Camp was organized at Chirai Salt Works, Moti Chirai-Kachchh particularly for Salt Agarias in association with Salt Department, Govt. of India and 201 agarias benefited from camp. Team of specialist doctors from Gandhidham provided their services free of cost with medicines. School fees were paid for needy students for Rs. 3000.00 to the Saraswati Vidya Mandir, Gandhidham. 6th Sharir Santulan Shibir (Body Balancing Camp) was organized in which Shri Ramjibhai Kanojia and Shri Dharmendrabhai Kanojia instructed participants how to sleep and sit in routine life so that we can avoid any disease. More than 65 people benefited from the camp.

A Mega Programme of Shri Kailashji Agarwal “Manav” from Narain Sewa Sansthan, Udaipur was organized at Holiday Village Resorts of Gandhidham and handed over Cheques of more than Rs. 25.00 Lac for Polio Operations of 2000 patients. The programme was displayed in Astha Channel live for more than two hours. A Polio checkup camp was also organized at Agarwal Bhawan on same day in presence of Shri Kailashji Manav and 61 patients were checked, distributed 6 tricycles and 2 wheelchairs to handicapped persons and sent 9 handicapped persons for further operations to Udaipur. A Yoga Camp was organized at Arya Samaj Hall at Ward 10-B in which Shri Janardan Bhau (trained from Patanjali Yog Vidhyapith) provided his services and more than 60 people attended the yoga camp for 6 days. A Medical assistance was provided to Govindram Gaur for his Medical treatment.

Book bank - 2013 project was conducted in which exchange of old textbooks were carried out between the students. Old textbooks were also repaired and handed over to the needy students of Kachchh without any cost. Also, the team distributed more than 18000 notebooks to various needy students on subsidized rates. More than 750 notebooks and textbooks of various classes were given free of cost to 162 Earthquake affected Orphan students of Jeevan Prabat. Manch incurred more than Rs. 50000.00 for the Book Bank project.

Educational Assistance was provided to needy student by paying their school fees to Shree Saraswati Vidya Mandir of Kachchh.
They have also been conducting a variety of cultural activities. Manch had organized an Inter School Patriotic Dance Competition at Vaidik Sanskar Kendra which was attended by more than 300 people. Total 10 schools participated. Free Diabetes Check-up Camp organized, in which famous Dr. Ramesh Goyal & his team from Apollo Hospital, Ahmedabad served their services and more than 120 people benefited from the camp. Yog Shibir was organized at KPT Gopalpuri Garden in which more than 250 people participated. New Ladies’ Branch was opened and is functioning its activities. Financial aids were provided for Padyatris (Pedestrian) of ‘Mata Na Madh’ by providing Dal/Rice etc.\(^{22}\)

Inter School Drawing Competition & Essays writing competition was organized by Manch under National Programme in which 112 students participated and three prizes were awarded to winners and winning drawing and essay were sent to national level for further competition. Dental Check-up camp was organized in various schools and Munch distributed free tooth brushes and pastes to more than 300 students. Medical Assistance was provided to Mrs. Rajni of Kachchh for her medical treatment of a severe disease. Medical Assistance was also provided to Mrs. Meena Vinod Kothari of Kachchh for her medical treatment.

Free Gynaec Medical Check-up Camp was organized at Ganeshnagar Primary School in which more than 150 patients benefited. Manch honoured Shri Brijmoha Agarwal, Hon'ble Minister of Chatisgarh State who visited Kachchh for the first time. Manch organized grand Bhajan Sandhya of Shri Vinodji Agarwal at Holiday Village Resorts in which more than 2000 people of Gandhidham participated and programme was telecast on Sanskar Channel.\(^{23}\)

Blood Donation Camp was organized at Blood Bank and approx. 2100 CC blood was donated on the occasion of Manch Foundation Day i.e. on 21\(^{st}\) Jan 2008. A Lunch was provided to 65 orphan children of Aadhar Sankool. Medical Assistance was provided to handicapped person Mr. Ghanshyam Joshi of Bhuj for artificial Limb (Full Leg) and amount was paid to Blind People Association of Bhuj. The patient was recommended by Shri Vansanbhai Ahir, Hon’ble Minister and MLA, Bhuj. Medical Assistance was also provided to Mr. Kamlesh Vaishnav of Gandhidham for his Angioplasty Surgery in V.S. Hospital in Ahmedabad.
Hasya Kavi Sammelan was organized by Manch at Holiday Village Resorts in which laughter challenge fame famous poets performed. The main poets were Tau Shekhavati, Ekesh Parth, and Nafisa Bharti, etc. The programme was organized under fund raising drive. New Branch at Ahmedabad was opened by the efforts of Gandhidham Branch and named the branch as “Greater Ahmedabad Branch” and Shri Mohanlal Jangid (President) was present in the first meeting of said newly opened branch. The Manch organized District level Inter-school singing competition and total 19 children participated. Shields and cash prizes were awarded to students who came first and second.24

Ramayana Sunder Kand Paath was organized at Ayappa Mandir. On the eve of Gujarat Day, prizes were sponsored by Manch for the best sanitation workers of Gandhidham Municipality and same was awarded by Manch in function organized by Government of Gujarat. On the eve of entry of Swarnim Jyoti Rath Yatra in Gandhidham, Manch had distributed 200 printed T-shirts to the participants of Yatra under self confidence and safety programme. General Medical Checkup Camp was organized at Doongarsee Salt Works at Village Padana for Salt Workers (Agariyas). Free Medicines were also distributed to the patients and more than 300 salt workers were benefited from the camp.

On the eve of Independence Day, the Manch organized Anti-Terrorism Rally in Leadership of Manch with association of 35 NGOs of Gandhidham in which more than 1000 people participated; Posters and slogans were displayed in the rally. Rally was converted in General Meeting at Zanda Chowk and local MLA, President of Municipality and prominent personalities addressed the meeting. The Manch organized Inter School Patriotic Song/Dance Competition at Vaidik Sankar Kendra and more than 24 schools participated. During the program of Chief Minister, Gujarat Shri Narendra Modi at Anjar, Manch distributed T-Shirts and Caps in the program and pamphlets were distributed on “Save Girl Child.”25

The Manch organized picnic cum General Meeting of both branches at Jeevan Prabhat for whole day. During the picnic, they organized sports, cultural program and
power point presentation of their activities along with taking dinner with earth quake affected children.

During the meeting organized by Gandhidham Municipality under “Nirmal Gujarat” project, Manch accepted activity of Door to Door Garbage Collection from more than 4000 houses. On the eve of Gandhi Jayanti, Manch started Door to Door Garbage Collection from more than 4000 houses of Ward No. 12-A, 12-B, 12-C and Sector No. 1-A. On the eve of Gandhi Jayanti, Gandhidham Municipality honored President of Marwari Yuva Manch, Shri Mohanlal Jangid in public function for the contribution/assistance of Manch in Nirmal Gujarat project for “Chal Kachra Ghar” by Deputy Collector of East Kachchh.

Manch organized a Mega Navratri Programme at Holiday Village Resorts and more than 25000 citizens of Gandhidham and Anjar participated during nine days and enjoyed the Navratri Dandiya. Thus they have been taking active interest in the local Gujarati Festivals, too. In a Government of Gujarat initiative “Nirogi Bal Varsh”, Manch distributed “Sukhadi”(a local sweet) to more than 920 pregnant women at Gandhidham. Hon. Minister Shri Nitin Patel presided over the function of Sukhadi distribution. Moreover, Manch would distribute Sukhadi every month to the pregnant women for coming 12 months consecutively.

Free Medical checkup camp especially for Ladies was organized at Primary School at Ganeshnagar, in which 122 patients were thoroughly checked and 22 patients indentified their further operations to Hospital at Bidada Sarvoday Trust. Under the “Chal Kachra Ghar” Project of door to door collection of garbage from more than 2500 houses every working day, more than 10 Tri-cycles and sweepers were engaged for the project. On the occasion of Foundation Day of the Marwari Yuva Manch, Manch organized Free Polio Correction Camp for Identification of operation of polio. It also distributed various aids for handicapped persons. It also organized a facilitation program of various donors, prominent citizens of Gandhidham. In the camp, more than 10 wheelchairs, 50 tricycles, 40 sticks, 60 walkers and 40 hearing aids were distributed free of cost to needy handicapped persons. On the occasion of Foundation Day of the Manch, organized Sadbhavna
Rally and homage to Martyrs on the eve of Republic Day and organized Patriotic Poet's Kavi Sammelan.

They also contributed in Government of Gujarat's Kanya Kelvani Fund (Girl Child Education Fund). Manch had also organized Jagaran of Mataji at Om Party Plot of Gandhidham and more than 2000 people / devotees visited the Jagaran. Manch organized National program of Marwari Yuva Manch. “Hamare Hanuman” at Shaktinagar Cricket Ground of Gandhidham and more than 1500 people participated in the program. Free Education Classes have also been conducted by the Manch for upgradation of Primary Knowledge of students of Navjyot Public School in subject of Hindi as well as Gujarati along with enchanting dancing skills. Manch provided 200 note books to the students of Anand Marg School of Gandhidham free of cost.

Manch organized Inter-School Patriotic Dance Competition at Vaidik Sanskar Kendra on the eve of Independence Day and more than 17 schools of Kandla Complex participated in the program and more than 200 students participated in the program. Manch provided momentos and certificates to the all the teams. Dipawali Sneh Milan was organized at Gandhidham which proves that a variety of cultural as well as social have frequently been organized in the welfare and unity of Kachchh. Manch also organized Artificial Limbs Camp at Gandhidham and more than 42 handicapped persons were provided artificial limbs manufactured by Marwari Yuva Manch.

Dance Competition was held by Manch at Vaidik Sankar Kendra and more than 18 schools 36 groups participated in the program and more than 300 students /members participated, too. Manch organized Inter-School Rakhi making competition and more than 125 students of 10 schools participated in the program. Marathon Race was also organized on the occasion of World Polio Day with a theme of “End Polio Now” and more than 1000 children and youngsters participated in the program.

Such a long list of activities of Marwari Yuva Munch proves that though they are Non-Gujaratis, they are the direct and active supporters in the lives of Kachchh people. They have been conducting a variety of medical, social and cultural activities in Kachchh and so they have become an integral part of the local region. Some of the pictures regarding the activities of Marwari Yuva Manch Gandhidham:
A Rally Against Terrorism
�ामाशाह सर्वश्री रामावतारजी गोयल,
रोहितमाई शाह एवं राजेन्द्र जैन गांधीधाम
के सहयोग से युवा मंच को प्रदत्त
29-09-2009

मातृमणि विधायक
श्री वासंतप्रसाद आहिर की
MLA फंड से और
उन्हींके हाथों लोकार्पण
31-10-2002

Ambulance Service By The Manch
Navaratri Celebration By The Manch
Bengali Association:

Bengali Association is a group of people cultivating the dictum of ‘VASUDHAIV KUTUMBAKAM’ (Living Together as a family). One can find such association in every district almost and Gandhidham is also not an exception. Gandhidham Bengali Association has been trying the best to enjoy all the activities conducted by them as if they were in their hometown. A peep into the manifold activities of the group can simplify the concept.

“This year, Bengali Association, Gandhidham is celebrating 38th Durga Puja Festival like earlier years. On this auspicious occasion, being a Secretary of Bengali Association, Gandhidham, I take the privilege to convey my heartiest greetings to all the residents of Gandhidham specially those who have contributed by way of any means to make this celebration a grand success,” says the secretary of Bengali Association, Mr. Surojit Chakraborty, Gandhidham in an interview.

“Most of the people of Kachchh know Bengali Association or Durga Bari due to this Durga Puja festival. But Bengali Association, Gandhidham is involved in many activities in respect of which people are not aware at all. Now, I take the opportunity to depict all such activities conducted by Bengali Association in the year 2011-12,” adds the Secretary.

As the Association is primarily intended for the benefit of Bengalis of Kachchh, the activities for the year 2011-12 have also been carried out keeping in mind such objective of the Association. The activities comprise of celebration of Festivals, cultural programmes, organizing sports and games, social activities and last but not the least collection of funds to promote such activities.
Celebration Of Festivals :

Being an Association for the Bengalis, like every year, they have celebrated Durga Puja, Laxmi Puja, Kali Puja, Saraswati Puja and Holi. Durga Puja for tenth year under report requires special attention as it was highly praised by almost all the news papers. The mandop was constructed by workers hired from Kolkata. However, the design as well as supervision was done by their own life members. The mandop was so beautiful that every local news papers published its photograph in their editions. Some of the TV news channels have also given the coverage. So many people of different parts of Kachchh flocked together during puja days only to see this mandop. In addition to mandop, idols, lighting decoration as well as administrative arrangement were highly appreciated by all local people as well as press. He was very glad to inform that as per report of Gujarat Samachar, their Durga Puja celebration was best among all such Durga Pujas in whole of Gujarat for the year 2011. Hon'ble President of India, Hon'ble Finance Minister, Railway Minister of India and Hon'ble Chief Minister of Gujarat and West Bengal have sent their blessings in the form of messages which were published in the souvenir. It is pertinent to mention here that the Souvenir was published on 1st day of Puja celebration by Hon'ble Senior Executive Director of IFFCO, Shri R. Murgappan. Number of dignitaries like local M.P. & MLA, Area Railway Manager, Gandhidham, President of Gandhidham Municipality and Dy. Chairman of Kandla Port Trust has also attended the celebration. Like every year, all the Bengalis residing at Kandla/Gandhdham/Adipur complex including some non Bengalis have also taken part in “Pankti Bhojan”. Around four thousand people have joined such bhojan during 3 days. In addition to Durga Puja, Kali Puja, Saraswati Puja, Laxmi Puja and Holi were also celebrated with great joy and cheer like every year, "30 said the Secretary.

On the occasion of Saraswati Puja, a calendar was also published by the Bengali Association and same were distributed amongst the members of the association and some dignitaries. In addition to the calendar, the souvenirs were also distributed among the members.
Cultural Programme:

“Being a Bengali, we are proud of our cultural heritage. Like earlier years, major cultural programs i.e. Bengali Association Cultural Festivals 2011 (BACFEST) were organized during Durga Puja,” exclaims the Secretary.

During Durga Puja, all the Bengalis enjoyed the performance of “Nirityabihar”, a cultural team of Bangladesh having more than ten international stage performances in its credit. They have staged various dance performances mainly based on their local folk songs. However, their dance based on current Bengali filmy song was enjoyed by their youth and children. All the performances were highly appreciated by the locals. Members and their children were also not much behind; they have also participated in the cultural program. Bengali song including music was available in their programs. In general, children, housewives of Bengali community had also exposed their talent in the field of song, dance etc.

Various Entertainment Programme At Night Of Kalipuja:

Entertainment programme like song, dance recitation, mimicries and “Antakshhari” were organized at night of Kali Puja and the same was enjoyed by the members.

Kachchh Carnival At Bhuj:

In response to the request made by district administration, Bengali Association (Kachchh) participated in Kachchh Carnival held at Bhuj on 9th December 2011 for the second time where Honorable Chief Minister Shri Narendra Modi was Chief Guest.

On this mega event where thirty four teams from whole of Gujarat including couple of teams from outside Gujarat had participated. Bengali Association (Kachchh) won the best performance award. The award was cash prize of rupees
twenty five thousand and a certificate of award to the Association including certificates to all participants in their names. This was the first time when the Association had won an award in its name.

**Rabindra Jayanti :**

Like earlier years, a drawing competition among children was organized on 8th May 2011 on the occasion of Rabindra Jayanti; Rabindra Jayanti was also celebrated on the next day at Tagore Park. The winner as well as other participants was distributed prizes at Tagore Park.

**Sports And Games :**

A Sports event was organized on 25th December, 2011 at IFFCO ground like earlier years; Around 280 Bengalis were present during that event. Breakfast and Lunch were provided to all the participants by Bengali Association. All the successful sportsmen and sportswomen were awarded by the Association by giving attractive prizes. The Senior Executive Director of IFFCO, Kandla was the chief Guest on the occasion.

**Social Activities :**

- Bengali New Year's Day

  “We, the Bengalis residing at Gandhidham / Kandla /Adipur / Anjar township are far away from our native i.e. Paschim Bengal (West Bengal). It is the duty of Bengali Association to share joy and sorrow of each and every Bengali residing here and that can be possible only when we interact with each other,”³² expresses the Secretary.
The Bengalis have been living in Kachchh and have proved them peaceful Non-Gujaratis who share their love and kindness with the native people.

“As a part of such movement, we organized celebration of “Poila Baishakhi” i.e. Bengali New Year Day on 15th April 2011 at our Durgabari premises. During this occasion around 260 Bengalis were gathered to exchange their best wishes of New Year to each other. That occasion was concluded by a Grand Dinner,” says Mr. Chakraborty in an interview.

- **Vijaya Sammelani:**
  As a part of social get together, Vijaya Sammelani was also organized just after durga puja. A team from Bolpur of Birbhum district had performed the famous “baul song” of Bengal. The program was concluded with “mistimukh” followed by dinner.

- **Multipurpose Hall:**
  The construction of multipurpose hall has been completed in every respect except some finishing work inside the stage which is yet to be completed. However, Renovation of Temple is in under progress and the same will be completed before new Durga Puja.

- **Iso 9001:2008 Audit:**
  Bengali Association (Kachchh), Gandhidham was granted ISO:2008 certificate by TCL, a Certified Body for this purpose, in the year 2009-2010, it can be treated as great achievement as Bengali Association (Kachchh), Gandhidham is the only social organization in Gujarat which has achieved such feat. The surveillance audit has also been done for the year under report.

- **Picnic:**
  A picnic was also organized by the Association on 15th January 2012 at Nagalpur of Anjar Taluka. Around sixty members and their families enjoyed the picnic. The expenditure was borne by the participants.
Blood Donation Camp & Netaji Janmo Jayanti:

A blood donation camp was organized on the occasion of 16th birth day celebration of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose on 22nd January 2012 i.e. before the day of birth day celebration. A total number of sixty persons have donated their blood. On 23rd January i.e. on next day, the President hoisted the tri colour and garlanded the photo of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

New Events /Achievements:

- Celebration Of Independency Day & Republic Day:
  Like other social organization, they have started to celebrate the Independence Day and Republic Day.

- News Papers Cum Library:
  A news paper cum magazine library in a small from has also been started again after a gap of two years.

- Membership Card:
  All the life members who have been enrolled up to 31st March 2012 have been issued the membership card, a dream comes into reality.

- Dance Class:
  A dance class has also been functioning since Saraswati Puja.

- Other New Achievements:
  It is pertinent to mention here that this time Saraswati Puja was organized by the ladies & children. It was in the first time in the history of Bengali Association when an event was totally organized by ladies and children. Special attraction of Saraswati puja was “Quiz Contest”.

  In the current year, they have published their event / program calendar.
In the new membership front, this year was most successful year in the history of the Association. A total number of 74 new members have been added in the list resulting a total strength of 205 members as on 31st March 2012.

It was a dream to have a multipurpose hall, sophisticated stage, own Kali Temple with regular worship in 1975 when Bengali Association was established. Now multipurpose hall & stage is a reality since October 2011 and Kali Temple with regular worship has started from 16th January 2013, the date for its inauguration.

In the current year the group has lost its beloved P.K. Mukharjee, the Ex-President who was associated with their association for about 25 years. They felt his absence not only during Durga Puja Days but forever.

It is hoped that 2014-15 will be more colorful & more constructive activities will be carried out by the association in the most transparent and democratic manner.

The cultural activities are the limelight as far as Bengali Association is concerned. They have mingled with the native people of Kachchh just as sugar mixes with milk. The Kachchhi people always get attracted towards the cultural activities conducted by the Bengalis. One needs to understand the importance of the Durga Puja along with other festivals.

**Durga Puja:**

Durga Puja is one of the most exciting and popular festival for Bengalis. Bengali Association Gandhidham (Kachchh) celebrates Durga Puja with great enthusiasm with gaiety to establish a separate identity of Bengali culture through various social and excellent cultural programmes in co-operation and co-ordinate participation of various communities residing at Gandhidham and adjacent township. With the co-operation and valuable contribution from the members, well wishers and donors the group is able to bring the “kuch hatke” performance from Kolkata to present a marvelous, exciting and enjoyable programme at newly renovated Radindra Natya Manch, Durga Bari. This was the first time of the association history that the renowned Amla Shankar dance ballet and singer Swagata Laxmi Dasguta were kind
enough to come down to Gandhidham from a far distance Kolkata to present the art and Bengali culture in 2012.

The five festive days of puja welcoming Devi Durga is aplomb with rituals and accompanied with the sweetness sound biting of dhak and dhunchi. Shaktimayee (powerful) Maa Durga's mode of journey to the earth is on elephant which signifies prosperity and good harvest and departs on boat which signifies the good crops and water all over.

With the help of tireless effort, co-operation and co-ordinate participation of all the committee members and the local Kachchhi people, previous year Bengali Association brought the theme of 'Madhubani Art' from Bihar and presentation was made by one of the committee members with his excellent art and decorative skill. They always feel sure that each and everyone who witnesses this beautiful art, will love it and accept its beauty with heart full of joy.35

All hope that the present trends of co-operation will continue and flourish the various pujas and activities of Bengali Association.

Pictorial Illustration Of The Activities Of Bengali Association Gandhidham is as under:
Dr. D.J. Sharma:

The whole Kachchh District is in despair due to certain psychological problems. In this area, again Non-Gujaratis have been actively participating with enthusiasm. Dr. D.J. Sharma of Patna, Bihar is a well known name who has opened an NGO called Om Foundation. Om foundation has started an initiative along with G.K. General Government Hospital Bhuj to suppress the evil of psychological diseases. They have started a psychological helpline to help prevent the suicidal cases in Kachchh. In the inaugural function of this Helpline, the president of Om foundation, Dr. D.J. Sharma facilitated the audience with the explanation and information regarding the behavioral approaches and problems of the people. He explained the characteristics of the diseased people. According to him, such persons would feel sadness, loneliness, fantasies of suicide, scarcity of reasons to live, not to be caring of himself, etc.

He also let his personal cell phone number - 9925267044 public so that anyone can contact him at the hospital during the stressed period of life. One can get the exact solution of the problem faced by him as well as the information regarding various psychological problems prevailing in the society and life. He further explains that a carefree and healthy life can be lived in addiction less atmosphere, peaceful environment, proper understanding, feeling of mercy, helping others, etc. According to Dr. D.J. Sharma, mentally fit person would be he who respects others as individuals, respects the thinking of others, and helps friends-neighbors-family-society in maintaining their businesses and professions whatsoever they may be. He would always be ready to help the needy and he who possesses the characteristics like morality, loyalty, honesty etc. can aptly be called a mentally sound person.36

Dr. D.J. Sharma presented a detailed account of the persons committing suicide in 2010 in Kachchh. The shocking number of successful suicides was 219 which means that after every 48 hours, one person would successfully commit suicide. While in India, after every 12 days, a person would end his life by committing suicide. Thus, the number of suicides in Kachchh is far more devastating than that of India. As Dr. D.J. Sharma explains that the person on the verge of committing suicide would think death a better option than living as he has been
surrounded by the diverse circumstances. To support the argument, he says that a newly married girl if suppressed at the In-laws’ house, she would suffer from ‘Adjustment Disorder’ and would not think twice before taking the fatal step. Likewise, a student, if burdened under the heavy stress of achieving high marks or percentages by his parents, would kiss the transient world good bye without a second thought. It is the duty of each and everyone in the society to find such persons and provide necessary help.

The characteristics of such persons as stated by Dr. D.J. Sharma are that one would be depressed, he would lose hunger-appetite and would not be able to sleep during nights, he would be strange while talking or behaving, he would lose interest in working, he would avoid meeting the friends and relatives, etc. According to the research conducted by Dr. D.J. Sharma, among 219 suicidal cases of Kachchh in 2010, 116 were men and 103 were women meaning that the ratio of man committing suicide is higher than that regarding woman. The details given by Dr. D.J. Sharma regarding the suicides in 2010 in Kachchh are as under:

The Facts Regarding Suicidal Cases In Kachchh:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total in 2010</th>
<th>Till 31\textsuperscript{st} Jan, 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East</td>
<td>West</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
W.H.O (World Health Organization) is the biggest unit in the world working for the benefit of the world health. Dr. D.J. Sharma of Bhuj and the Om foundation were given an award in 2014 by W.H.O America because Dr. Sharma had translated the English version of the banner prepared by I.A.S.P. (International Association For Suicide Prevention) in the Kachchhi dialect. Dr. Sharma prepared the banners in Gujarati, Hindi and Kachchhi and sent them to I.A.S.P. and the banner with Kachchhi was given validation. He appealed to the I.A.S.P so that he can start a campaign against suicidal cases prevailing in Kachchh. Thus, his contribution towards the Native people of Kachchh is noteworthy as their plight is given voice over here.

The helpline initiated by Dr. Sharma has created the magic, more than 400 lives until now have been saved due to his efforts.\(^\text{37}\) As the helpline suggests, one has to just ring on his cell phone number provided in the newspaper before taking the last step to end the life, and he would be successful to convince the sufferer for sure. In this way, Dr. Sharma has been able to save the society with his campaign under the maxim:

“Remove Depression
Prevent Suicide.”\(^\text{38}\)

Thus, Dr. Sharma’s steps taken to uplift the mental level of Kachchhi people have been successful and he gains an honorable place despite being an outsider to Kachchh.

The Pictures Regarding Dr. D.J. Sharma's Manifold Activities Are As Under:
The Seminar Regarding Mental Help Of The Adolescents
The Celebration Of World Mental Health Day
Ravindra Singh Saini:

Mr. Ravindra Singh Saini is from Punjab but has settled in Anjar Kachchh since his birth. He considers himself as a pakka Kachchhi as he has been providing his services to the native people since long. In 1956 his father Mr. Sohansingh Bavasingh Saini came to Kachchh to do some personal business in Kandla Port but after that he never returned to Punjab as thought Kachchh to be peaceful and progressive-developing area. Mr. Sohansingh started his business of Cargo handling which was titled ‘Kachchh Highway Transport’ and he has contributed a lot through his infrastructural equipments in the development of Kachchh. In an interview with him, he proudly indicates that his was the first ventured called ‘Kachchh Highway’ in the field of Transportation of Kachchh. Infrastructural Sector of Kachchh has been benefited a lot through his various efforts. He explains that they were initially the Punjabi farmers but in Kachchh, transportation business attracted him a lot.

Sohan Singh's son Mr. Ravindra Singh Saini has been a social activist to help the people of Anjar-Kachchh. He is affectionately called ‘Rajubhai’ by Kachchhi people. He has worked as a counselor of one of the wards of Anjar for three consequent terms. And during the tenure of his counsellorship, he solved most of the problems of the people living in his ward. As he was born in Anjar-Kachchh itself on 15th October, 1967, he possesses extreme affection for the people of Kachchh. During the devastating Earthquake in 2001 of Kachchh, he helped the needy in his own methods. The then Deputy Collector Mr. Sarvaiya was given shelter in his unused house so that he could handle the grief stricken people of Anjar as well as Kachchh.

Religiously, he is active in many ways. He is the present Vice President of Lakhpat Gurudwara. He is also active in Gandhidham Gurudwara. In an interview, he explained that all the Sikhs gather at Gandhidham Gurudwara on every Saturdays & Sundays. And this gathering symbolizes the unity of India as the people from outside Gujarat work religiously in the area of Kachchh. On weekends, the gathering and 300 poor people take meal together in Gandhidham Gurudwara. He is also a pioneer in initiating Samuh Lagan in Sikh Samaj-Kachchh. ‘Samuh Lagan’ is a kind of ceremony in which more than a couple get wed-locked at the same place assisted financially by the donors of society. In the previous year on 25th May, 2013, 5 couples of Sikh Samaj were married off due to Mr. Ravindra Singh's efforts.
But the most generous contribution of Mr. Singh is that he organizes ‘Navratri’ every year in Anjar-Kachchh which is one of the most religious festivals of Hindu People. He organizes it so that the Native people can enjoy the festival without any fees to be paid by them. There would not be any entry fees and all would enjoy it free of charge which earns a large place for Mr. Singh in the hearts of Kachchhi people. He started ‘Navratri Chakrava Mandal’ in 1988 and has been organizing it up till today which means that he has been doing the noble thing for consequent 25 years. He is the President of ‘Navratri Mandal’ of Chakrava area in Anjar and conducts many religious and moral activities. Here, apart from the celebration of Navratri (Nine Nights Celebrated in the worship of Goddess Ambe.), many religious activities like feeding the Cattle, providing water facilities to the unowned animals, celebration of Janmashtmi of Hindu religious, etc. have been effectively conducted by Mr. Singh which earns him a place of Kachchhi though not Kachchhi by birth.

His activities have been duly recognized and respected by the president of Patanjali-Anjar, Mr. Bharat Thacker. He honored him in typical Gujarati way on behalf of the Native People. He was also given the idol of Maa Jagdamba (The Goddess in Hinduism) by the President of V.H.P- Anjar, Mr. Dinesh Thacker. Thus, it can be said that his life span has been full of manifold activities in the welfare of Kachchhi people in general and the people of Anjar specifically. One can never ignore his contribution towards the Kachchhi people as Mr. Singh has been ever ready to uplift the religious level and activities in Kachchh.

**Kachchh Navniraman Abhiyan**:

Kachchh Nav Nirman Abhiyan, better known as Abhiyan, is a collective of Kachchh based development organizations with a strong local presence. The objective of the network is to synergize human knowledge, physical & financial resources to collaborate towards a Kachchh which is governed by community initiatives. And the most importantly it is headed by Sushma Iyengr, a Non-Gujarati.

This network encourages self help development, especially with marginalized sections, integrates traditional wisdom with new technologies and innovates and balances issues of human rights with human responsibilities.
Emergence of Abhiyan:

The wide geographical expanses of the Kachchh District coupled with the harsh living conditions gave birth to varied community groups and self-help groups who started working towards improving the livelihood of the people in general. Over a period of time, these groups were formalized as Community Based Development Platforms (locally known as Non-Governmental Organizations or NGOs in short). However, different priorities and competencies of these NGOs created uneven development and exclusion zones in the District. This was reminiscent in the June 1998 cyclone when the immediate relief operations were either duplicated or missed by lack of coordination among the governmental and other agencies and due to gaps in implementation processes. These prompted the NGOs to come forward to provide support to the affected people under a common umbrella, which drew synergies from each other’s competencies. 40

Thus started a collective effort of various organizations towards rehabilitation of the affected people. 22 local organizations came together, and started working as a group. The group thus formed came to be known as - Kachchh Sankat Ane Punarvasvat Abhiyan, which had a common goal of working for the rehabilitation of the cyclone affected people. This practice enabled the NGOs to build capacity and gain confidence to perform as a collective, even in totally unexpected disaster situations. Consequently it was realized that NGOs need a common platform to share the developmental efforts. Thus, Kachchh Sankat Ane Punarvasvat Abhiyan was renamed as Kachchh Nav Nirman Abhiyan (in short Abhiyan) to work as a supporting & networking organization to voluntary organizations of Kachchh, on the issues, which are of common interest.

Abhiyan Belives in:

The network’s core belief is inculcating self- rehabilitation of the individual communities and given the drought prone nature of Kachchh district, is constantly ensuring that local capacities are built and the resources maximized to avoid dependency. Abhiyan is committed to leveraging available resources to catalyze development and further strengthen the innate force of the community. 41
Abhiyan today:

As of today, the network has grown into a caucus of 38 rural development organizations. Collectively, the member organizations of Abhiyan cover more than 650 villages in the district through their work in various sectors – such as natural resource management, watershed management, micro-credit, handicraft work with artisans, health, drought management, etc. Not implementing the projects directly, Abhiyan plays a background role by initiating activities like training rural youth of the district, in rural development & social work management, developing a data bank of Kachchh including detailed socio-economic, political and ecological database of each village and policy advocacy within the district and state focusing on Primary education, drinking water management and disaster management. 42

As a District Network:

The organizations forming the network belong to varied backgrounds having specific agenda and geographical priorities. This network forms a strong collective of multi-specialty groups along with the technical, voluntary and professional expertise working in tandem towards a common goal. This common platform enables the partners to share their developmental efforts in sectors like education, natural resources and disaster management, and work as a network that could influence policies. As a network, Abhiyan respects the inherent strengths of its member organizations and optimizes its efficiency while working on the developmental agenda in and out of Kachchh.43

Incubating innovations:

Abhiyan has been a platform to incubate innovations, and new initiatives focusing developmental issues. This is the core impulse which has allowed Abhiyan to draw out the potential of its member organizations. Irrespective of the range of developmental responses that Abhiyan has been involved with – and which have been at various periods supported by different partners – Abhiyan continued playing its fundamental role – of incubating community led innovation and initiatives. However, after a period of support and continuous nurturing, Abhiyan has always believed in
curving out scopes to further mature and grow independently. This is how Hunnarshala and Khamir have been the off-shoots of Abhiyan and are now functioning independently.  

- **Major Initiatives:**

Apart from working on the social, economic and ecological issues of the Kachchh region, Abhiyan has emerged as an influential organization in the Country on issues of sustainable, community led post disaster rehabilitation policies and action. This has been possible due to its intensive grass-root presence as well as work with national and international organization on the issue.

A focus on conservation based economic regeneration is of particular significance in a region which is extremely vulnerable to climate change impact. This constitutes a critical component of Abhiyan’s work with its member organizations and Setus (Bridges). Focusing on drought which is the regular disaster in Kachchh, the drought proofing program has been a collective initiative of the member organizations towards drought mitigation and revival of water resources through traditional sources leading to a State Policy. The Setus have developed as a grass-root model which lends itself to different contexts – it has been replicated in Tamil Nadu and now, with Govt. Mandate, in Bihar.

The devastating earthquake on 26th January 2001, with its epicenter about 20 km. Northeast of the District Headquarters in Bhuj, caused severe damage in four Talukas, Bhuj, Anjar, Bhachau and Gandhidham, while a number of other Talukas were also affected.

Communications with Kachchh were cut off almost immediately after the earthquake, although some people reported that they could get through on the telephone in the first hour or so. The more direct route from Ahmedabad to Kachchh was also cut off due to damage to the Indira Gandhi Bridge.

On the approach to Bhuj via the Northern route via Radhanpur, one saw occasional broken houses till Samakhyali, where every house was reduced to rubble or had large cracks which made them uninhabitable. In both the urban and rural areas,
the fear of after-shocks has forced most of the population to live in temporary shelters close to their own houses. The urban population has had fairly immediate access to shelter, blankets, etc.

There was an immediate public response; there was and still is a large and relatively well-to-do Kachchhi community in cities like Mumbai and Calcutta. Unfortunately, due to lack of proper direction, a lot of these supplies were offloaded on the main road, and did not reach the villages.

During the 1998 cyclone, the NGOs in Kachchh came together to set up a coordinating organization for disaster situations, and named it Kachchh Navnirman Abhiyan, contracted in day-to-day use as Abhiyan.\textsuperscript{45} At the time of the earthquake, there were fourteen NGO members. Between disasters, the Abhiyan addressed itself to training for social work and management for rural youth, developing a District level databank, including Village Gazettes, and Public Advocacy, particularly impacting policies on primary education, drinking water and drought-proofing. The Abhiyan did a rapid needs-assessment, and contacted Janvikas, an Ahmedabad based NGO, which took on the role of coordination with other NGOs and influential individuals for the State of Gujarat. A coordinating group, Janpath, was set up based at the Ahmedabad office of Janvikas, and immediately started contacting aid agencies and Government for a relief effort. In short order, as requests came in from the Abhiyan for supply requirements based on the rapid assessment, supply collection and supply lines were set up.

Both Abhiyan and Janpath have been recognized by the District and State Governments respectively as the official coordinating NGOs. Every morning there is an NGO coordination meeting attended by the District Collector, where he updates the information from the Government and the aid agencies and participating NGOs were briefed on the latest situation; these were duly minuted and circulated to all concerned. The effort, with the help of the District Administration, was to have any large or small participants channel their inputs after consultation on where they were needed, so as to avoid overlap and duplication. However, the system was not foolproof. Additionally, this kind of unorganized distribution had resulted in some local influential families, particularly the high-castes to garner large surpluses at the
expense of the weak. All in all, however, distribution was better and more equitable than one could expect in such confused circumstances.

In Kachchh, there was a great deal of coordination, particularly within the larger NGO groups (Kachchh Sewa Trust, Sewa, Swaminarayan Trust, Ramakrishna Mission and the RSS). The immediate requirements were communications linkage, and supplies of shelter, blankets and food. With the help of ham operators organized from Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, a radio link was set up between Ahmedabad, Bhuj and Samakhyali, later spreading to some of the worst affected urban areas. Sadly, satellite phones were not immediately available, although a few were later brought in by aid agencies. The out-of-date rules for radio transceivers set up by the old Raj have never been brought up to date, and even ham operators were required to pass a Morse Code test in that day and age to qualify for a license. Janvikas had set up a logistics base at the Vocational Training Centre of Navsarjan, a long-standing NGO partner, where tarpaulins, bamboo, ropes, blankets food kits and other requirements were put together and sent out to Kachchh. Both production and availability of shelter materials (tarpaulins and tents) had been slow, while blankets and food have been adequately coped with. Food kits were ready-prepared for one month's supply, to ease distribution. Other requirements, such as crutches, electric equipment, etc. were sent out from the Command Centre at Janvikas in Ahmedabad, where a highly effective procurement unit purchased requirements other than food and shelter.

In Kachchh, as supplies were being distributed, a team of professionals from organizations such as the National Tree Growers Federation, an offshoot of the National Dairy Development Board, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, The Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur, etc. joined the NGO coordination teams to do a more thorough assessment. Simultaneously, twenty-two sub-centres were set up in key locations, with the idea of not only controlling distribution, but also for empowering villages by starting a process of village committees, which will ensure proper and equitable distribution, and would plan the rehabilitation phase, inclusive of creations of needed village assets and drought-proofing measures. These sub-centres currently covered over 240 affected villages.
A word was needed based on the first reports of the teams who had been talking about rehabilitation of houses. Three different responses had been received—all positive. In one village, the villagers said that they would prefer to sort through the rubble themselves, recover usable building materials, and set up their own houses, requesting only some cement and hardware where needed. In another village, the planning was the same, except that the villagers wanted small interest free loans for the rebuilding. A set of villagers said that they would combine the strengths of their villages to rehabilitate themselves.

Attention was also being paid to areas outside the heavily affected Talukas of Bhuj, Anjar, Bhachau and Gandhidham, as the concentration had been on the most-affected areas. There had been a trickle of villagers from the outlying, so-called low priority areas with reports about destruction of housing and exposure, particularly affecting the children. Field teams were currently assessing the needs of these areas. While there was no dearth of volunteers, the problem had been one of finding volunteers who had the necessary expertise to carry out some of these tasks. In a resource crunch such as the current one, it had been necessary to turn down volunteers, as it made more sense to employ local people for the physical end of those tasks - this also helped to increase their badly damaged self-worth and dignity, and helped them recover faster from the trauma they had suffered.

From the onset, qualified medical teams had responded to the injured, and were assessing the possible future scenario. It was singularly fortunate that there had not been an outbreak of gastro-enteritis so far - a few cases of viral enteritis had been reported. However, upper respiratory tract infections were taking their toll, and there had been a number of reports of children and older people being affected, including some pneumonia deaths. At this point in time, three sectoral groups had been set up by the Abhiyan, covering shelter, health/water/sanitation and education.

Power and water supply were very rapidly restored in Bhuj. The telephones took quite a bit longer. Fortunately, the bore wells supplying the cities and dry rural areas of Kachchh were intact, although some of the pipelines had been damaged. These affected areas were being supplied by water tankers. Large-scale distribution of
chlorine tablets had been carried out. The restoration of power supply and communications was slower.

As mentioned above, the District Administration was cooperating strongly with the NGO efforts. They were re-activating the Public Distribution System (PDS) to set up an ongoing system for supply of essential food materials. The State Government had yet to finalize whether the food should be distributed free, at subsidized or at market rates. The option of earnings for the population under the Employment Guarantee Scheme, which would be very good for the dignity and self-respect of the population, besides creating permanent community assets, including drought-proofing measures, was under consideration.

The Central Government had also responded creditably by simplifying customs and immigration procedures for imports of supplies and aid agency personnel. The concerned officers were of a very high caliber, and were highly sympathetic to the needs of the situation.

The Army and Air Force had responded magnificently. Army personnel were in the forefront of efforts at rubble clearance and recovery of bodies - they even extricated a living person 105 hours after the earthquake! The Air Force had kept Bhuj airport operational despite the losses of personnel and materials they have themselves suffered, and had waived a number of set-piece regulations - a fine example of management by objectives!

Here is the short story of a Non-Gujarati who felt a lot for the plight of Earth Quake affected people:

Mr. Prem Singh, son of Mr. Sultan Singh, age 52, came from village Baheni Maharajpur in Rohtak District of Haryana. He was an Arya Samaji, a small farmer and livestock owner. When he heard about the earthquake, he felt compelled to do something for the victims. He went round his village and collected 80 blankets, wrapped them into three bundles, and, since the others in his village were too scared to take them to an earthquake affected zone, decided to bring them to Kachchh himself. He took a bus to Mahan, the village with the post office for Baheni
Maharajpur, and then hitched a ride on a jeep to Rohtak, where he took a train to Delhi. After changing trains in Delhi and Ahmedabad, he reached Gandhidham, where he got on a bus for Bhuj and landed up at the Abhiyan camp. He had been helping out with the distribution and trying to locate a needy village where his 80 blankets could be handed out personally.

A plane load of tents, blankets, tarpaulins, jerry-cans, water tanks, kitchen sets, etc., shipped from Denmark by the Irish aid agency Concern, was delayed and landed at Bhuj airport after the Abhiyan clearing staff and Concern staff had left for the night. The aircraft also carried three aid agency workers. The Deputy Collector at the DM Control Room at the airport immediately sent a runner to the Abhiyan camp, whence the Concern staff were contacted, and rushed to the airport. Galchar, the Deputy Collector, with his staff, immediately went about lining up trucks to transport the materials to the Abhiyan depot. Mr. Shukla, Deputy Commandant of the Industrial Protection Force arranged for his troop to provide the labour for loading the 38.5 tons of supplies from the aircraft onto trucks - a four hour job, for which the NCO refused to take money for tea and biscuits. Sub-Inspector Patel of the Immigration Branch of the Police took the names of the three arriving aid agency staff and cleared them asking them to report and regularize their arrival at the Immigration Office in Bhuj the next morning. Most amazingly, Mr. P.P. Jadeja, Asst. Collector of Customs, and his colleague Mr. S.N. Nair, cleared the consignment in five minutes flat.

The Kachchh Nav Nirman Abhiyan is a network of 14 grassroots NGOs that was founded as a response to the devastating cyclone that hit Kachchh in May 1998. The Abhiyan galvanized highly effective disaster relief operations by close coordination between NGOs, the district administration, health services, donor agencies and the disaster-affected. Eighty trained social workers of the Abhiyan conducted a detailed survey of 197 villages of Kachchh, which was later legitimized by the government for their rehabilitation and compensation schemes. Through its 14 grassroots NGO members, the Abhiyan works in 400 villages of Kachchh district.

Subsequently the Abhiyan emerged as a network of voluntary organizations in Kachchh undertaking coordinated planning, lobbying and training activities to strengthen the voluntary movement in the district. It has undertaken a range of
development initiatives including training of rural youth for social work and policy advocacy on drinking water, primary education, disaster management, natural resources and industrialization. Recently the Abhiyan had mounted drought-proofing activities in 200 villages of 5 talukas of Kachchh district in partnership with the district government with financial support from the United Nations Development Programme.

Among the members of Abhiyan is the Kachchh Mahila Vikas Sangathan, one of the first NGOs to start work with rural women's collectives 1989. Today they work intensively in 150 villages of 5 talukas of Kachchh on a range of development issues such as handicrafts, health, literacy, savings and credit and eco-restoration.

**Member NGOs of the Abhiyan are:**

> - Kachchh Mahila Vikas Sangathan
> - Sahjeevan
> - Vivekanand Research and Training Institute
> - Kachchh Yuvak Sangh
> - Bhimani Khadi Mandal
> - Ashapura Foundation
> - Kachchh Ecology Foundation
> - Gram Swaraj Sangh
> - Anarde Foundation, Kachchh
> - Ecology and Environment Cell
> - Patidar Yuvak Sangh
> - Saraswatam Trust and
> - Shree Sangh
> - Shrujan Trust

Following the devastating earthquake of January 26, 2001, the Abhiyan network had commenced a monumental relief operation in Kachchh—probably the greatest-ever trial of their physical, moral and emotional strength. Relief work had
begun in close coordination with the district administration, donor agencies and the Janpath Citizens’ Initiative support centre established in Ahmedabad.

The survey of 160 villages had been completed, two main depots for collecting and routing relief supplies had been set up at Bhujodi and Samkhiali, and sub-depots had been set up in 16 centres including Khavda, Kodki, Habay and Baladiya. An NGO desk had been set up at the district collectorate and the Bhuj airport. Contemporarily, ham radio units were operational at Ahmedabad, Samkhiali and Bhuj, along with cell phone connectivity.

Collectively, the member organizations of Abhiyan cover around 450 villages in the district through their work in various sectors – such as

- Natural resource management
- Watershed management
- Micro-credit
- Livelihood upgradation and generation with craft artisans
- Empowerment of Women
- Health
- Education
- Drought management
- Drinking Water Management
- Disaster Management
- The Earthquake

The 26th January 2001 earthquake had its impact on the entire State of Gujarat, devastating in particular, most of the villages and towns of Kachchh. The calamity took thousands of lives left many injured, orphaned and homeless. Out of the 25 districts of Gujarat 21 districts, 181 talukas and 7633 villages fell prey to this devastation. After 16th June 1819, this was the first time that Kachchh had suffered such an enormous loss of human life and property. The epicenter of the quake was 20 km North East of Kachchh that caused maximum damage to Bhuj, Rapar, Anjar, Bhachau, Gandhidham and Mundra affecting 884 villages. The total number of human deaths in Kachchh was 12221 and the number of severely injured persons,
In a tremendous response by civil society to the situation, more than 200 NGOs have been working in different sectors, namely, housing reconstruction, dam repair, health, education, handicrafts, livelihood and legal. With its prior experience in disaster management and local presence and network in all the blocks of Kachchh, Abhiyan emerged as a nodal coordination point in the relief and rehabilitation efforts that began on January 26, 2001 in Kachchh District.

The person behind this movement is a Non-Gujarati named Sushma Iyengar who has been active in the field since a long time and has devoted her whole life towards the welfare of the native people in general and native women in particular. One needs to peep into her life if he wants to know the source of strength she has gathered in her life.

Sushma Iyengar is the Executive Trustee, Abhiyan. She has done her Masters in Literature from MS University, Baroda and a three year Master’s programme in the USA at Cornell University. She worked to set up the Kachchh Mahila Vikas Sangathan which is the first network for grass root women’s organization in Gujarat in June 1989, with organizing the women’s empowerment movement through social awareness and livelihood programme. She was one of the original signatories of the Abhiyan movement of which she has been the Executive Trustee. Through Abhiyan, she had been actively involved in the cyclone relief work, earthquake relief and rehabilitation work as well as tsunami relief work.

She started the Kachchh Mahila Vikas Sanghtan to improve the lot of women in Kachchh. From reproductive rights to elevating women from wage earners to skilled entrepreneurs, she has made a difference to many lives.

At a clinic in Khavda, one of Kachchh's furthermost districts on the border with Pakistan, local Kachchhi women run the show. They are not only skilled midwives who take care of just birth and delivery, but also train women in reproductive rights, health and family planning. They are the pillars from which the Kachchh Mahila Vikas Sanghtan and its founding member Sushma Iyengar derive their strength and love.
Thirty nine-year-old, shy and low profile Sushma sees herself as an educator, a catalyst and a learner.

“Ultimately you realize that you have to walk alone. But to be able to do that in an empowered way, you have to first walk as a collective. I think it's the poor who have realized this best,” says Sushma.

Coming together wasn’t an easy task because sometimes their own inhibitions restricted them. But they all fought caste, class and religion and came together as women. But Sushma knew Kachchh was her Karmabhoomi. Having lived in Gujarat for several years, she believes true empowerment comes when you are able to sit across with those you may not agree and transform them. And what started as women’s movement has allies in men, fathers, brothers and husbands today.

Traditionally the women of Kachchh kept the beautifully embroidered pieces as part of their trousseau but successive natural calamities meant they were forced to sell them to middlemen. Sushma helped them come together as a collective. As the numbers grew so did their confidence. Soon the production processes were tied, middlemen eliminated and their positions elevated from wage earners to skilled entrepreneurs.

“It’s very important not to turn the organization and initiatives into a personality driven institution and it’s important to give rise to new leadership,” says Sushma.

And the mission she says must go on.

She has also prepared an article on ‘Disaster Management – Largely in the context of Earth Quakes’ which prepares the people of Kachchh to fight such natural calamities in the future, too. Brief details regarding it are as under:

- Timing is critical – especially for facilitating and governing initiatives of varied Stakeholders, before they begin their own Initiatives. In the lack of timely policy
interventions, mechanisms and resource inputs, disaster management loses collective synergy.

➢ Overall Disaster Management Approach:

i. Plans for involvement and ownership of the affected in their rehabilitation.

ii. Should become an opportunity for improving development indicators of the region.

iii. Must cease to see rehabilitation and development as two independent stages.

iv. Should focus specifically on the most vulnerable and use disasters to reduce old/existing vulnerabilities.

vi. Must strengthen local governance – the dynamics and politics of external aid through

vii. GO and NGO interventions tends to disempower them rather than otherwise.

viii. Rehabilitation measures must ensure strengthening of local economy and livelihoods.

ix. Should integrate compensatory assistance with a system for insurances – would reduce

x. The politics of aid.

xi. Intensive focus on educating citizens to ensure and institute safety.

xii. Promote decentralized management of services and infrastructure by local governance as a developmental approach to ensure that in a disaster the collapse of centralized Systems do not lead to a complete collapse of all infrastructure across the affected region.

➢ What is urgently required?

i. A generic approach and policy for disaster management.

ii. Specific policy for cities and towns; Specific for rural.

iii. Strong enforcement of environmental legislations and norms in all

iv. Large and small developmental projects across the country.

v. Developing and Creating a Steady and committed resource pool of Institutions/ individuals/experts.

vi. Specific capacity building, mandated disaster mitigation
Programmes and earmarked allocations for disaster mitigation with

vii. Municipalities and district administration/gram panchayats especially.

viii. Clear manuals and checklists for each phase with all district Administrators.

ix. National media campaign on issues of safety and mitigation.

x. Educational curriculum made mandatory.  

Sushma Iyengar

Kachchh Vikas Trust:

Rev. Fr George, belonging to the CMI St. Xavier’s Province, Rajkot was born in 1940 at Karimannoor, near Thodupuzha, Kerala, and was ordained priest in 1969. His first appointment as Priest was in Dharmaram College, Bangalore, and the major seminary of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate. There he was designated to manage the huge dairy farm of the seminary. After his service in Bangalore for nine years he was appointed Prior of the Monastery at Vazhakulam. And it was from here that
Bishop Jonas picked him up for his future glorious service in the Diocese of Rajkot in 1981.

Fr. George Kunnath

Father George is a person whom the people of Kachchh will never forget. He was a great missionary who took the message of the love of God to the poor and suffering people of the hard terrains of Kachchh, geographically as big as Kerala, as part of the social work department of the Diocese of Rajkot. The blind, the deaf, the lame, the poor, the marginalized and the mentally challenged in great numbers found new energy and life in him. A winner of many, church, state and national awards, he was considered by the locals as the uncrowned king of Kachchh because of the amount of welfare work he did and the influence he had in the society and with the Government.
The Kachchh Vikas Trust (K.V.T.) of which he was the founding Director, which post he held until his death is a registered Charitable Trust based in Raidhanpar, Bhuj, in the District of Kachchh was formed by 1981 by the late Bishop Jonas Thaliyath. Financed by the CHRISTOFFEL BLINDEN MISSION and the ANDHERI HILFE, its aim was the integral development of the Kachchh region.

The main work of KVT is spread in the 250 acres of land belonging to the Trust. The major works are integrated education centre and hostel for the blind children, General Dispensary, eye specialization hospital, Rehabilitation of the blind, AIDS care, agricultural training centre, Dairy farm, fish hatcheries, fisheries cooperative societies, etc. From here they reach out to scores of villages for medical camps, water shed programmes and advocacy and awareness programmes. The devastating earthquake of 2001 brought the true mettle in the person of Fr Kunnath. He worked hard, got the assistance of funding agencies and built countless houses for the victims.

He was actively involved in the following Government and Non Governmental bodies:

- Reproduction and Child Care committee of Government of Gujarat
- Committee for Child Labour Abolition
- Hariyali Project a Lead NGO in Gujarat
- Fisher Peoples Association
- National Association for the Blind, Kachchh,
- Blind welfare Council, Kachchh,
- Federation of the Blind, Kachchh

Fr George Kunnath’s foresight and vision for future was instrumental in the founding of seven other mission stations in the region of Kachchh which are now doing much needed service in the social and academic sectors in the following places:

i. Lakhpat
ii. Dayapar
iii. Mandvi
iv. Naliya

v. Mundra

Since 1998 Fr George has received a dozen awards from the state and National Governments, for his outstanding services for the rehabilitation of the blind, marginalized and the poor.

He received the following awards:

- 1998 Van Pandit award from Government of Gujarat

- 2001 Award for outstanding service to the disabled from the Government of Gujarat.

- 2002 Award for remarkable service to the earthquake affected people

- 2003 Bharat Excellence Award for outstanding service to the marginalized and poor

- 2004 Best Employer of Disabled Award by Government of Gujarat

- 2006 National Award for Best Employer of Disabled in the year 2006

- 2007 Award for outstanding service for the welfare and development of the disabled in Kachchh by Kachchh Blind Welfare Association.

- 2008 Social Apostolate Award by CMI Congregation for the outstanding service to the needy and disabled.

- 2009 Gujarat State Award for the Welfare of the Blind and Disabled by Gujarat State Branch of NAB

Dressed always in simple attire, and keeping a smile always in his lips, Fr George Kunnath was a boss with a difference for the over 150 staff at KVT that
included priests, sisters and lay people belonging to different religions. He reached every spot where KVT’s work was underway, met each staff member and worker and gave appropriate directions to one and all.

His idea of the mission was the following:

“Let the people feel the Good News of Jesus from our selfless activities, rather than from our lips. They will start asking questions why we are here. The third or fourth generation of missionaries will hopefully, see some disciples of Jesus from this soil. In the meantime, the people have begun to say among themselves, we please our gods by feeding the cows, but these Christians do so by serving us.”

Fr. George has 5 brothers and 6 sisters, one of whom is a nun in the Presentation congregation. Indeed, Fr George Kunnath’s life is an invitation to all of us to shed any sort of lethargy in our lives and embrace of life of action for the suffering and the needy in whose forms Jesus appears to us every day.

The Heaven created on Earth by Fr. George Kunnath: Kachchh Vikas Trust :

Kachchh Vikas Trust is a charitable organization registered with the government. It is registered under Bombay Public Trust Act, 1950 Reg. No. E644/Dt. 27-11-1980. This is non-political, non-profit and non-sectarian in nature. The services of Kachchh Vikas Trust are available to all sections of the people, without any discrimination of caste, religion and social status.

The main activity of Kachchh Vikas Trust is welfare activities for the disabled. They started these activities 20 years ago. This includes Formal Education of the Disabled Children in integrated setup, Vocational Training, Rehabilitation Services, Placement and Employment Services, Marriage Bureaus for the Disabled, Prevention of Disability, Comprehensive Services to the disabled etc. Majority out of
the 300 staff members in Kachchh Vikas Trust are engaged in Welfare Activities of the Disabled.

- **Integrated Education Centre for the Visually impaired & Physically Handicapped:**

  The Main Concern of Kachchh Vikas Trust is the education of the blind and handicapped children, the less privileged in the society and working for their all round development. They are given free education and training in the school. In this Integrated Education Centre the physically and visually disabled study along with the normal children coming from the slum area and nearby villages.

  The visually challenged are given special training to cope up with the difficulties in their life from the early days onwards. Special coaching is imparted in Braille and daily living skills. With special facilities a resource room is provided to impart this training to the blind children. The medium of instruction of the school is English and under the aegis of efficient and dedicated staff the school is making great strides. They also have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular and co curricular activities of the school.

  With an aim to impart free and quality education to Disabled children, who are otherwise unable to attend school due to their disability and poverty are given free accommodation, food and clothing in the hostel. Both girls and boys, physically, visually and multi-disabled, are given accommodation in the hostel.

- **Hostel for the Disabled:**

  The hostel is divided into twelve units or houses wherein a housemother looks after each hostel, cares for 12-15 children; who are physically and visually challenged. A meticulous timetable with extra inputs and coaching instill a sense of confidence and pride in the children to face the challenges of the world outside.

- **Adult Education:**

  They found 0% literacy in some of the villages in Kachchh. With an aim to
enable the illiterate to make a sense of their life, they impart adult the opportunity, at least to scribble their names and to create a sense of satisfaction and pride in their lives.

In order to impart basic education at the door steps of the visually challenged, K. V. T. provides teachers for their education. These teachers go from village to village and train the blind for Braille writing, Orientation and Mobility, Daily Living Skills, etc.

- **Eye Care Activities**:

  Health care is one of the main areas of priority for Kachchh Vikas Trust. The health scenario in Kachchh District is not encouraging as a whole. With an aim to provide quality medical and health care to the people in the villages around, K. V. T. has undertaken many programmes. Eye related problems are steadily on the rise in this part of the country. And so, eye care activities are a priority with, all the means of eye health and eye screening programmes, all over the district.

  The daily eye camps screen the patients for eye related problems, and the different OPDs at different cities and towns cater to the people at their doorstep. On an average they conduct 300 surgeries per month. And operations go up every year, with more outreach camps.

- **Prevention of Blindness**:

  One of the major initiatives undertaken by Kachchh Vikas Trust includes prevention of blindness, through various interventions. Their major initiatives include, survey of the blind, daily eye camps, distribution of Vitamin A tablets, School screening for children with visual problems, awareness camps for prevention of blindness etc. They have also taken up Comprehensive Eye Health Service in this district, wherein they have the task of survey, Eye Camps; Community based rehabilitation, Integration in other schools and Itinerary Teachers to visually challenged children. They could reach different parts of the Districts, where by generating awareness and instilling confidence among the masses.
The Eye Patients Treated At K.V.T.

- School Eye Screening:
  Children in the schools of entire Kachchh are helped through this programme. Teachers are given special training in Eye care methods and children are treated for refractive errors and surgical proceedings are done those who need them.

- Vision 2020, Right to Sight:
  K. V. T. is also the partner in the Global fight against avoidable blindness. They also actively participate in the programmes and policies of the forum for such move, which is called, Vision 2020, Right to Sight India.
 Adult Eye Screening:

They also have a full time Adult eye screening team, who go to the villages of Kachchh and conduct eye screening camps. All those who are detected with any of the eye problems are treated free of cost.

The Adult Eye Screening At K.V.T.

 General Medicine:

In order to give succor to the people in the nearby villages, they provide primary health services and health camps in the villages. A permanent resident doctor caters to the health needs of the people.

 Physiotherapy:

The devastating earthquake has made a lot of people invalid and disabled.
They cater to their needs with two centres at Bhuj and Nakhatrana. They are given all the advanced physiotherapeutic treatment at subsidized cost.

- **Mother & Child Health Care:**
  In order to help the poor women and children in the nearby villages, K. V. T. has come forward to provide them nutritious supplements for their all round health and growth.

- **Community Eye Health Care Services:**
  It is a comprehensive programme, where in eye care services along with rehabilitation are given priority. So far they have given assistance to more than 650 disabled people in the villages, like economic rehabilitation, community rehabilitation, all the assistance from the Government schemes.

- **Marharshi Astavakr Yojana:**
  Under this programme, the Taluka of Nakhatrana is covered with a comprehensive survey and all the disabilities are covered. The Disabled are given all the necessary certificates, passes and all the schemes are programmes of the Government and rehabilitation and integration.

- **Community Based Rehabilitation (C. B. R.) for Deaf - Blind & Multi Disabled:**
  There are a few who can neither hear nor see what is happening around and their life is lived miserably, with parents and relatives disowning many of them. Some of them are multi-disabled, with spastics, mental retardation, physical disability, deafness and blindness. K. V. T. with assistance from Sense International has initially set up the centre to look after the people with multiple disabilities.

- **Child care Centres:**
  They also continue their eye care programme, with more awareness generation programmes, school screening and more advanced and feasible eye care facilities. They also make the staff more competent with more exposure programmes and up gradation and other training events in the field of health, education, village development, environmental development, co-operative enterprises and so on.
The Health Inspection Of Children At K.V.T.

➤ Others:

In its efforts to reach the un-reached and less privileged sections of the society, Kachchh Vikas Trust has got many other welfare activities also. They have reached more villages with Watershed management programmes, Women Empowerment programme, through self help groups and handicrafts, housing for the poor, comprehensive eye care programmes, literary missions and we are also evolving strategies to create aids and HIV awareness programmes in the villages.

They have 12 children who are given in house training and about 15 children who receive assistance at their homes, through C. B. R. field workers. They also conduct simultaneous survey and it is heartening to note that there are more such people than they expected.
Watershed Project:

Another very ambitious and farsighted project that they have undertaken is the watershed management programme with assistance and support from Government. They have so far completed more than 35 villages and work is in progress in 15 other villages. Structures such as farm bunds check dams, percolation pits and ponds, well recharging, deepening and cleaning of existing village ponds are some of the activities that are executed under this project. The depleting of water table can be arrested with this programme. The participatory approach together with the people of the villages makes it more meaningful and people oriented.

Kachchh Vikas Trust is also the Lead Project Implementing Agency, out of more than 50 NGOs to execute and oversee the work in the entire district of Kachchh, and also assist and evaluate the programmes of other NGO’s implementing the work. During the project period the partner will also coordinate with Government to facilitate Vitamin A supplementation and immunization programmes in the project area.

Community Eye Survey:

This project proposes to initiate a Community Eye Health project (C. B. R. and I. E.) in one of the most backward areas in the country hence to enhance the quality of eye care services in this remote area. Through this project the partner plans to create awareness among the people on eye health and ensure community participation through training of volunteers. Rehabilitation of irreversibly blind persons including children is also planned under this project.
The Community Eye Survey At K.V.T.

Various Activities and their Outputs:

- Awareness generation on eye health among the target population.
- 60 screening camps and screening of 12,000 people.
- Referred 3,000 poor patients for IOL surgeries.
- Screening of 15,000 school children through school screening Programme.
- Referred 60 Pediatric patients for IOL surgeries.
- Referred 300 Glaucoma Patients for Treatment.
- Facilitating Vitamin A supplementation and immunization programmes.
- Follow up of postoperative cases.
- Integrated education for Blind and low vision children in the project area.
- Rehabilitation of 200 blind persons
Specific Activities:

- CEH workers training in primary eye care and rehabilitation (Two modules)
- 60 mass awareness programmes through cultural and folk media (20 programmes each year)
- Training of 300 school teachers in primary eye care from 90 schools
- Training of 150 PHC (primary health centre) staff in primary eye health.
- Training of 100 SHG (self help groups) leaders in primary eye care.
- Training of 300 Community health workers / traditional medical practitioners in primary eye health.
- 120 Children’s eye screening events (40 events a year)
- Provision of spectacles to children
- 60 Screening camps, 20 camps per year
- Follow up of postoperative cases.
- Integrated education for the blind children (Appx.16).
- Rehabilitation of 150 irreversibility blind and law vision persons.
- Referral for Treatment (Both surgical and medicine) of patients at base hospital

The Detailed Graphical Analysis of Kachchh Vikas Trust:

Staff Pattern at Kutch Vikas Trust
Lakhpat Gurudwara:

Gurudwara Pehli Patshahi meaning the “Gurudwara of the first master” is situated at Lakhpat, Kachchh - A town in Gujarat, visited by Guru Nanak Sahib during his second and fourth missionary journeys (Udasis) in 1506-1513 AD and 1519-1521 AD respectively. Gurudwara Guru Nanak Sahib has been built to preserve the memory of these visits of revered Guru during the early 1500s. Guru Nanak is believed to have visited this site while he was on his way to Mecca during the Fourth Udasi. A few rare personal possessions of his are retained here.

The Still Of Historic Lakhpat Gurudwara

In the course of Guru Nanak Dev ji’s travels, he visited Gujarat and traveled on to Lakhpat. In old times, Lakhpat was part of Sind (now in Pakistan). Lakhpat is 170 kms from Gandhidham, Gujarat, India. In the sixteenth century Lakhpat was known as “Basta Bander”. Lakhpat used to be a rich rice growing area and was also a
popular port. However, due to an earthquake in 1819 A.D., the area became barren and crops withered away due to a lack of water as the river disappeared after the earthquake.

To commemorate Guru Nanak Dev ji's visit to Lakhpat, a Gurudwara was built in the early years of the nineteenth century. A vast tract of land was bestowed to the Gurudwara to make up expenses for maintenance and to look after the visitors. The revenues from the land and the crops grown there have sustained the Gurudwara. Lakhpat is about 20 km from Korini village where there is a big Lake in memory of the visit by Guru Nanak Dev ji to this area. From Lakhpat, Guru ji crossed to Somiani port in Sind for his famous journey onward to Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia.

Although a Gurudwara has stood here since the 1800s, in the later part of twentieth century, some Sikh families settled near Lakhpat and in other parts of Kachchh, particularly at Gandhidham. This was the port-city of Kandla port, which was built in the year 1952. In the wake of independence of India in 1947, lot of Sindhi's families settled in Kachchh from erstwhile Sind Province. Sindhi's have been devotees of Guru Nanak Dev. They with the co-operation of the Sikh's built a Gurudwara at Gandhidham and this Gurudwara management along with a Sindhi fellow settled at Lakhpat after independence. They have been looking after the Lakhpat shrine for the last 50 years.

It is believed that Guru Nanak Dev ji stayed at Lakhpat several times during his trips to Mecca and Medina (Saudi Arabia). The place served as a seat of the Udasi Sect. Several rare treasures are preserved at Gurudwara Shri Lakhpat Sahib, including the “charan Paduka” - Khadvas (wooden footwear) that belonged to Guru Nanak Dev ji.

At present various extensions are being added to the Gurudwara complex and this “sewa” of additional building of Yatri Niwas (visitor's sleeping rooms), Langar hall (Dining hall), Diwan Hall (congregation hall) is being undertaken by Shri Baba Lakkha Singh ji - Baruch.
UNESCO Award to Gurudwara:

For the people of Kachchh, there was a reason to celebrate. The Gurudwara, Lakhpat had bagged the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Conservation Award for the year 2004. The award comprises a scroll and a trophy which goes to CRCI (Cultural Resources Conservation Initiative).

The Archaeological Survey of India, the State Department of Archaeology, United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Volunteers supported the Conservation programme which took seven months for restoration, as the Gurudwara was damaged during 1998 cyclone in Gujarat and the January 2001 earthquake in Gujarat.

The government of Gujarat undertook the conservation and reconstruction of the 200-year-old Gurudwara at Lakhpat in Kachchh district after it was damaged during the 2001 earthquake.

“Impressed by the efforts, UNESCO has conferred the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Award to the Lakhpat Gurudwara and thereby appreciated the state government,” an official release said.

The cultural activities department had taken up reconstruction of the Gurudwara through people's participation. The project received a grant from the Archaeological Survey of India and had the cooperation of the United Nations Volunteer Programme.

Conferring the award, UNESCO stated, “The restoration of this Sikh house of worship demonstrates a sophisticated holistic understanding of both the technical and social aspects of conservation.

“Careful attention to detail and sensitive repair work have ensured the retention of the building's historic character. The emphasis on involving and empowering the community ensures the long-term survival of the historic building and its associated cultural traditions.”
The Lakhpat Gurudwara is an active place of Sikh worship and is frequently visited by tourists and pilgrims. Lakhpat, a prosperous port town and trade centre until the early 19th century, is one of the most significant historic settlements of the region. There are numerous historic sites associated with saints of different religions within the walls of this fortified settlement. The Gurudwara itself dates to the nineteenth century.

The significance of the Gurudwara lies in its association with the Udasi sect, believed to be the oldest Sikh order. It is also believed (although factually not correct) that Guru Nanak Dev, founder of the Sikh religion, visited the site in the sixteenth century in route to Mecca. It houses relics such as a decoratively carved wooden cradle, wooden sandals that are believed to have belonged to Guru Nanak Dev, manuscripts and markings of two of the important heads of the Udasi sect.

Initially, the caretakers of the site were drawn from the Udasi sect. Later, the Sikh community from the Gurudwara Nanak Singh Sabha in the nearby port town of Gandhidham started taking care of the site. Religious functions were organized periodically to ensure the continuity of religious rituals and to keep the historic importance and religious sanctity of the place alive.

The Gurudwara complex is comprised of a main building, which has a courtyard, and a separate structure that is a gateway. This gateway, located on the western side of the complex, is a double storey building with a large pointed arch entrance and massive wooden doors. The courtyard, which precedes the main building, is accessed through a low gateway along the eastern side. The main building is a double storey building. The ground floor comprises two rooms with a long verandah that is parallel to its courtyard edge. A wooden staircase leads from the verandah to the terrace above it. There is a one room, one storey structure adjoining the main building at a right angle, creating an L shape design along two sides of the courtyard.

Built with locally available limestone and red sandstone laid in lime mortar and plastered with a fine coat of lime plaster, the external walls are decorated with
projecting carved stone balconies and perforated panels. The roofs are sloping with a horizontal timber ridge beam at the apex and wooden purloins supporting the common rafters, and covered with bamboo strips, mud mortar and tiles. The internal and external walls have paintings in line pattern with floral motifs around the openings and select areas of the walls. The largest room in the main building houses an elaborately decorated wooden swing with polychrome floral paintings on its surface and the verandahs have intricately carved wooden columns. Other decorative features are stone sculptures in human and animal forms fixed in the stone masonry.

The Gurudwara was declared a “protected monument” in 1992 under the “Gujarat Ancient Monuments and Archeological Sites and Remains Act”. It is maintained by a trust fund established through the contributions of the Sikh community, both local and regional.

Today the settlement at Lakhpat has a population of around 400, with the majority being Muslims. The Sikh community constitutes a very small segment in the region. The people in Lakhpat, irrespective of their religious backgrounds, are a very closely-knit community. With the recently increased communal tensions in Gujarat in mind, the restoration project was viewed as one way to attenuate the region’s religious tension by encouraging participation of various communities in the conservation of the sacred site of “the other”.

The Front Part Of Historic Lakhpat Gurudwara
Project History:

The Sikh community based in Gandhidham, a significant port town in Kachchh, approached the Cultural Resources Conservation Initiative (CRCI), New Delhi to assist in the conservation of the historic Gurudwara. Being a protected monument, the community was unable to get permission for its repair work from the State Department of Archaeology. Additionally, the State had no plans or budgetary allocation for its conservation. It was hoped that by working with CRCI, the project would become a possibility.

CRCI visited the site in 2001 and prepared a project proposal for the conservation of the building which they submitted to the Archaeology Survey of India (ASI) for funding. Due to the immense loss of heritage in the region in the wake of natural disasters the ASI undertook the funding of the project.

The project was further supported by the United Nations Volunteers Program of the UNDP, who provided conservation architects as volunteers for the project as part of their commitment to work for the conservation of cultural heritage. The conservation work began in February 2003 and was completed in September 2003.

Determining appropriate reuse

In addition to its continued use as a place of worship, the Gurudwara Trust members have proposed using one of the rooms as an exhibition space for the interpretation of the site. The space will house the old relics including an early 19th century Guru Granth Sahib (holy book of the Sikh community) which, prior to the restoration, was housed in Gandhidham.

This project demonstrates how 'conservation for and by the people' can make a positive difference to their living environment. It was instrumental in bringing together the people of the village and the Sikh community to work for the cause of safeguarding their common heritage. This project further demonstrates the methodology to enable constructive dialogue and thereby motivate participation of traditional institutions and the local community in safeguarding their own heritage of which they are the caretakers.
There are Shri Guru Nanak Dev ji's “charan Paduka” – KHADAVAS (footwear) at Gurudwara Shri Lakhpat Sahibji.53

Charan Paduka Of Gurudwara Shri Lakhpat Sahebji

Kerala Samajam :

The common dream of a few enthusiastic ‘Malayalees’ living in Gandhidham locality in Gujarat to have an association where they could share their thoughts and come together led to the idea of a ‘Samajam’(Society) during the early late 50’s. It was a matter of time in 1952; the Kachchh Kerala Samajam was registered.

Their Samajam is affiliated to ‘Federation of Gujarat Malayalee Association (FEGMA) which is the nodal organization of various Malayalee Associations in Gujarat that aims to project and present the ethnic diversity of Malayalees in Gujarat & their Samajam is also member of Non-Resident Keralites’ Affairs (NORKA) under the Government of Kerala to redress the grievances of Non-resident Keralities.
The Management of the Samajam is vested in an Executive Committee consisting of Five Office bearers viz. a President, a Vice – President, a Secretary, a Joint Secretary and a Treasurer and twelve Executive Committee members. Their Membership shall be of only one category i.e. 1. Life Membership. Any person who is a Malayalee by percentage or Language and not below eighteen years of age, residing in Gandhidham locality and subscribing to the basic principles and the rules & regulations of the Samajam are enrolled as Members on payment of the prescribed membership fee.

The main objective of establishing the Samajam was to build a common platform for the Malayalees irrespective of their alliance to religion or their economic or social status and look after the interest of the members as also to interact socially and culturally with the local population. And thus Kachchh got a Non-Gujarati group which is intelligent and sociable in nature and such groups have made Kachchhi region colourful, peaceful and national.

- **Voluntary Blood Donation Camp**:

  On the eve of our Kachchh Kerala Samajam’s 60th Anniversary Celebration, our Samajam with the support of IMA, Gandhidham had conducted a Voluntary Blood Donation Camp on Sunday, 25th March, 2012 at Kairali School, Lilashah Nagar, Gandhidham from 1000 Hrs to 1600 Hrs. The blood units collected from this camp were donated to IMA, Gandhidham so that it would help for the treatment of the needy patients. KKS arranged refreshments for all the donors and participants of the camp.

  A total of about 100 units of blood were collected in the camp. Every section of the KKS community including youths & others came forward for the blood donation activity. KKS was fortunate enough to witness the rare sight of people standing in queues to voluntarily donate blood. All were grateful to the Executive Committee Members, the staff members of IMA, Gandhidham as well as the donors for their active participation & making that camp a successful & a historic one.

60th Year Celebration of KKS
On 26th February, 2012 – Kachchh Kerala Samajam, Gandhidham celebrated its 60th Anniversary Celebrations at IFFCO Auditorium, Udaynagar in a Grand Manner. The special Guest of the occasion was Prof. Shri. D. Vinayachandran, the well known Poet & the Guest of Honour who graced the function was Shri. L. Murugappan, Sr. Executive Director, IFFCO.

Onam Celebration

In 2012, just like the previous years, KKS celebrated the Onam Festival in Grand Manner with varieties. On 9th September 2012, ‘Onam Pookalam Competition’ was held at ‘Kairali School’ Lilashah Nagar & followed by ‘Onasadya 2012’. A record number of attendances were recorded for Onam Sadhya that year & six teams participated in the Onam Pookalam 2012 competition & all the participants had explored their best ability and creativity in the competition.

- Kachchh Carnival 2011:
  Kachchh Kerala Samajam (KKS) felt proud that KKS had retained the First Place in the “KACHCHH CARNIVAL 2011” – the Prime Cultural Festival organized by the Gujarat Government on the banks of Bhuj’s historic Hamirsar Lake, held on the 09th December 2011. The people of Kachchh are thankful to all the Participants, Volunteers, Students/Staff of Kairali School, Members & their families for their active contribution in the Local Cultural Programme and thus contributing in the Cultural Heritage of Kachchh.

- Onasadya:
  The Grand Feast “Onasadya” has been celebrated in September of every year at “Kairali” Lilashah Nagar, Gandhidham by KKS which shows the sense of unity and their active interest in maintaining the traditional culture of Kerala even in the remote region of Kachchh.

  With a good vision to educate and facilitate the social background to the society, Kachchh Kerala Samajam started the Kairali English School (pre-primary section) in 1997 with 5 students. The requirement of education of the poorly back grounded children encourages the Kachchh Kerala Samajam to promote the pre-primary section to primary section in 1999. With a good intention to motivate and
promote the educational, cultural, intellectual, physical and mental power of the students, Kairali School registered its secondary section in 2003. Kairali School got the permission to start the Higher Secondary section (General Stream) in 2008. Now the Kairali family is nourished with 647 students, 20 teaching staff, 10 non-teaching staff, furnished class rooms, laboratories, modest assembly hall, 3 buses, a good and energetic band troupe etc.

In the Academic year 2005-06, the first SSC batch appeared for the board exam. Whereas in March, 2010, the first batch of the HSC appeared for the Board Exam. It was one of the proud moments for Kairali School when an HSC section footed up 100% result from the year of its inception. Adding a feather to its cap – in the SSC second batch Kumari Shreyasi Chakraborty gave a boost to the School by bagging 6th rank in the Kachchh District.

Every year the School conducts curricular and co-scholastic activities in inter and intra level. As a token of this, in 2008, the Kairali School won the 2nd prize in the Kachchh Carnival. Not only this, in 2010, the School won two prestigious 1st prizes as one in Kachchh Carnival and another in Gandhidham Carnival. As an essential part of studies, the School conducts the study tour and picnic in time to time. To moderate the spoken English, the School registered with SCOPE (Tripada).

- Main Objectives Of KKS:

  To strengthen this bond with Gandhidham and encourages its members to provide and maintain social, recreational and cultural activities pertaining to Kerala, including service activities to benefit the needy in general and national interest and its value.

  i. To create in all Malayalees a sense of awakening to foster and sustain the glory of their language, literature, arts and culture.

  ii. To promote and encourage athletics, sports, games and fine arts.

  iii. To provide facilities for social interaction among the members.

  iv. To identify talented students from economically and thus socially weaker families, give proper guidance and financial assistance at any level of their education without any discrimination on the basis of sex, caste, creed, language or religion.
v. To provide all possible financial assistance to those from economically weak families who suffer from life threatening diseases and help to the victim of natural calamities.

The Pictures Regarding The Activities Of Kerala Samajam Are As Under:

Onam Celebration By Kachchh Kerala Samajam

Onasdaya Feast By Kachchh Kerala Samajam
Kutch Kerala Samajam (KKS) - Gandhliham
Consecutive Winners of
KUTCH CARNIVAL 2011
Participation Of Kachchh Kerala Samajam In Kachchh Karnival

Kerali Women Performing In Kachchh Karnival
Participation Of KKS In A Cultural Activity

Medical Awareness By KKS Gandhidham
Notes and References:


(2) Ibid.


(4) Ibid.


(6) Ibid.

(7) Ibid.

(8) Ibid.

(9) Ibid.


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(18) Ibid.


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(22) Ibid.

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(43) Ibid.

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(50) Kunnath, George. The official website of Kachchh Vikas Trust.
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(52) Ibid.

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