

MINUTES OF THE GAMONNATI SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT SHREE MANDHATA SAMAJ SAHAYAK MANDAL LEICESTER ON 14 August 2011

Attendance: see register

Chaired by: Chhaganlal

Meeting started at 11.00 a.m. with prayer followed by welcome by Shree Manubhai, the Vice President of SMSSM Leicester and Shree Chhaganlal, the convenor, followed by self introduction by those present.

Apologies: see register

Chhaganlal then explained the procedure to be followed for a Gam Mandal to claim Gift Aid through AMSUK. He suggested that big achievements by Gam Mandals should be celebrated. He also stated that AMSUK could help Gam Mandals wishing to register as a charity. He intended to link up with Bhikhubhai but that did not happen. He thanked SMSSM Leicester for hosting the meeting and thanked Shree Keshavbhai for running the activities of Gamonnati sub-committee for so many years.

GAM REPORTS

Bodali

1. Extraction of sand from Purna River is flooding some properties and causing environmental problems. It also affects cattle and fishery and the big trucks also damage roads and water pipelines. A petition signed by some 800 people in India has been sent to the Chief Minister of Gujarat Shree Narendrabhai Modi and NRI should also join in by signing forms or electronic means. The building construction involves rich and influential people who lease the land from Gujarat Government for up to 20 years. Permit to extract 5000 tons p.a. but they ignore. If gamvasi find it injurious to gam they can apply through the Gam Panchayat for cancellation of the lease. Village is politically divided.
2. Street lighting: NRI prepared to fund the installation cost and Gamvasi to fund maintenance, which was declined and the project is on hold at the moment.
3. Litter Bins installed at a cost of £1000. This was not well planned. Litter being burnt instead of clearing the bins.
4. Young men dying from alcohol abuse leaving young widows, which currently number 976 in our Gams. As an alternative to alcohol they introduced Volleyball to keep them occupied. They provided 2 Nets and 6 balls. Also Bhajan mandali project was suggested but the response was poor.
5. The School has been provided with 2 work stations, 8 PC and two teachers employed for teaching English and computing, all funded by NRI. Seems to be running well. High school is progressing well.

6. Technical education e.g. ITI qualification is promoted. Collection of fund few years ago, pays for all projects from interest only.

Kothamadi

Kothamadi Gam Hitvardhak Mandal formed in 1968 and has done many projects. In 1980 started English class in Gujarati school. In 1984 Pethan Kothamadi high School project was completed where no fees are charged to students and books are provided to the needy. 6 teachers are funded by NRI and the rest paid by the Gujarat Government. Now planning a building for the bank which should generate an annual income of Rs. 72,000. No other projects now envisaged. Those in village trusted with projects in the past were not forthcoming with credible accounts and also NRI now visit on annual basis, hence project and funds are controlled from U.K.

Karadi

School project is in its fourth year and running quite well. There are two Gujarati classes, and the rest English medium classes. 9 teachers are privately paid. Students in English medium classes increased from 95 to 226. There are 728 students in total from 75 villages. School bus is provided as needed with two drivers and plan in consideration to buy mini bus as demand grows. School has 21 laptops with wireless broadband. School has a good library housing some 4000 bar coded books and is open to all.

School has a laboratory facilitating studies in Physics, chemistry and biology and has 4 teachers teaching 60 students. A fee of Rs 350 is charged for these courses. Nursery school fee Rs 2000 and primary school fees Rs 2800. There is also a hostel where 235 boys and girls live and they pay Rs 5000 (juniors) and Rs 8000 (seniors). (95% of the students are from our samaj)

School has other activities mainly Teacher's day, picnic, fancy dress, Cultural program, Independence Day celebration, sports like volleyball and cricket and has an annual sports day in which 13 secondary school participate.

Results 2010 92% . There are 37 teachers of which 25 paid by the State Government and 12 privately paid. The accounts are clear and transparent and can be viewed on website. Donations so far amounts to £326,000

Currently planning to build a 1.5km long road to the Smashan.

Things work differently in India and dealing with politicians and government is not straightforward. What help we give is getting results but should be properly used and controlled by us. Action rather than words is needed and urges other gams to do the same.

Borifalia

Borifalia is one the falia's of Sultanpur (other falias are Jogeshwar, Kakarad, Mandalia and Khambhlav.

Free medicine continues to be provided for all villagevasi, which costs approx. Rs 5000 p.a. Water supply, boring at a cost of Rs 10 lakh funded by government completed and are trying to install filter plant paid by Government. Gam only pays for electricity. In future Gam will pay 30p per litre. Taluka Panchayat grant of Rs 4 Lakh was provided for street road development. Village ponds are to be deepened so that rain water can be retained. Normally grants are approved in May, just before monsoon begins and the contractors start work in May which often remain unfinished. Part of the approved grant end up in unknown hands.

Chijgam

We are small in number, some 40 families in UK.

In the past crematorium (22years ago)and mandir project (17 years ago) were satisfactorily completed. Encouraged by the success of these projects, took on new school building project two years ago costing

Rs 37 Lakh, which has been completed. Taken as AMKUK project and gained Gift Aid help. The land required was donated by gamvasi and funding was

Mainly by NRI from Canada. New Zealand, USA and U.K. Waterworks, Underground gutter and street lighting are three new projects under consideration. Integrity of governance has been entirely satisfactory with clear and transparent accounts.

School boundary wall and sanitary facility remains to be provided and the school committee are working on it. Sports has been encouraged with positive results, particularly in alcohol related problems and youths appear to be more united.

Avda falia

Mandal in the U.K. started in 1954 and now run by mainly youths. Built a cricket pavilion capable of hosting Ranji trophy. The pitch cost Rs 1 Lakh. Only Two matches played last year. Need to use more often.

The school had 51 students and now reduced to 47 with 5 teachers and 3 more for teaching Computing and English. 12 students go to Bharat Vidyalay Karadi. Due to reduced number of students the school may have to merge with Matvad. Roads wide enough for cars. Water is now adequately available. Hanuman mandir has no caretaker or maharaj yet runs smoothly. Around 300 visitors on Hanuman Jayanti.Youth unity is good. Gutting system is under consideration. Crematorium built but not yet in use due to water shortage. Dancing at wedding procession stopped but parties and gambling (playing cards) continues.

Dandi

Religious activities at Radha Krishna mandir good.

A medical centre mainly financed by Minaben and Maheshbhai costing Rs 46 Lakh was opened last month. Handed over to Government to run it. Doctors and staff have not yet been provided.

Roads need developing but held back by politics. This is not likely to improve while the same person remains as Sarpanch.

Wedding processions are marred by drink and dancing. Dandi is a historic village known worldwide for Mahatma Gandhi's historic salt march yet grossly ignored by government. So much land is being wasted through soil erosion. Rs 33 crors have been approved but so far no action has been taken. Gujarat chief minister Shree Narendra Modi has been reminded time and again but no action. During his visit to Karadi school he was requested to pay visit to Dandi, which was turned down.

School has 7 standards for 54 students. Seven teachers of which 3 are state provided and 4 privately funded by Canadian NRI. School run by Dhirubhai achieves good academic results. Water supply was a big problem. Aat project cost Rs 15 to 17 Lakh failed and the pipeline is still not disposed off. Matvad, Samapore Dandi project succeeded and water problem is now happily resolved.

Apparently the government is spending 25 crors but on what? No one in the village knows apart from may be the Sarpanch and Talati. Baba Swami Ashram aquired 200 acres of land but who sold it? Some of the youths have no regard for Gandhi Smarak and are found consuming alcohol there.

Mandirgam

Had one of the first High School, which closed and was restarted at a cost of £1200. A mix community comprising of Muslims, Desai, Hadpati, Ahirs, and Koli and the Desai have strong influence. New school half built and ran out of funds. £12000 sent from UK. Shree Dahyabhai personally stayed in Gam for five momths and the school is now completed with some help from the Government. School runs from interest on Rs 5 Lakh deposits. 12 STD achieves 80-88% result every year. 8th STD now moving to primary school. Water storage cost split 60% Government and 40% Gam. Rs 2 Lakh were sent by UK Mandal. BJP Sarpach and MLA (R.C.)work in harmony with Good results. Land for Smashan donated by a muslim Gamvasi.

Hospital – Sarpanch was invited to Gandhinagar and granted permission and within two weeks Bhumi puja was organised. Collector in Navsari was initially not so helpful. In 2003 it was completed and was handed over to Government providing running costs. There are 2 doctors, 5 Nurses and office staff all paid by the Government. The health service is provided free of charge and normally 60 to 70 patients visit each day. Spare fund of Rs 40 – 50 Lakh retained for future maintenance costs. Accounts are audited and transparent.

Nani Pethan

Sports Ground, cricket pitch is an ongoing project. Smashan was located at this sight and had to be relocated. MLA (R.C.) to provide Rs 2 Lakh to be paid in stages and Rs 1 Lakh funded by Gam. Visram Gruh built by Gamvasi, funded by U.K. Mandal. Water project funded 10% by Gam and 90% by Government at an estimated cost of Rs 14 Lakh which went up to Rs 50 Lakh within a year.

Amalsad

Koli are in minority. There is no Amalsad Mandal in the UK.

It has good education base. Have agricultural co-operative society which provides excellent facility to farmers. Control in the hands of Desai. Some 70 trucks loads of chikoo per day is exported.

Andheswar Mandir is now well known land mark, mostly donated by Desai. New good quality road from Amalsad to Abrama and Char rasta.

Smashan provides free service to all (donation accepted if given)

Devdha dam has created opportunity for fishery development and some of the wells with salty water have gone back to fresh water.

Corruption is the biggest problem. Nothing gets done without giving Rs 50- 100 to the Talati.

Kalika Mataji mandir in Masa Gam nearly completed. Bilimora Hall completed and opening ceremony by Late Shree Kanjibhai Lalabhai. Education is at the top of their agenda.

Kalthan, Onjal, Sagara, Tavadi, Vasan, Mokhala, samapore

No attendance and no report this time.

Miscellaneous

Navsari asset project (KPVs)

There is land at 4 sites in Navsari rightfully belonging to Samaj The sites are valued at Rs 20 – 30 Crors and currently operated by three trusts.

- 1917-1922 Purchased Koli Ashram
- 1972 Purchased Chhapra Road (1.5 Acres)
- Nutan Society
- TKHV mandal

The land purchase was funded by Transvaal Koli Hitwardhak Mandal S. Africa. The trust was trying to sell all and take funds back to S.A. which was strongly opposed by AMSUK and the idea was dropped by S.A. Mandal.

The object is to unite the three trusts. There will be a special meeting for this project in September 2011 where all Gam Mandal presidents and secretaries will be invited to air their views.

Summary:

Extraction of sand from Purna river is an environmental hazard.

Alcohol abuse and related problems, leading to enormous number of young widows.

Education, mainly not enough teachers and falling standard due partly to lower standard of teaching staff. Reducing number of students in Gam schools

Gam politically divided which hinders some projects. Lack of Unity among Gamvasi.

Corruption right down to Talati and Sarpanch

NAP not to be questioned in AMSUK AGM

Gamonnati subcommittee approved signing of petition against sand extraction subject to Approval by AMSUK.

Minutes to be published on web site with AMSUK's permission.

Any suggestions for improvement to next year's meeting to be addressed to Chhaganlal. It was suggested to hold more meetings preferably quarterly rather than just one annual meeting. Chhaganlal suggested that next year we should link up the village representatives through web-camera and skype. This would make the Gammonati meeting even more relevant and interesting.

The meeting concluded with vote of thanks, prayer and Jana Gana Mana

Minutes taken by Dahyabhai D Patel, Wembley, Chijgam.

DD 24/08/11