

Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra — 54 Years of Putting the Last First in Jharkhand and Bihar

In 1971, four graduate engineers from Bihar made an unusual professional decision. Influenced by Mahatma Gandhi's autobiography — "Satya ke Prayog," the story of experiments with truth — they chose rural Jharkhand over urban careers and founded Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra in Hazari...

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They were engineers who understood that the problems of Jharkhand's tribal communities were not primarily technical. The deepest problem was that communities living in one of India's most mineral-rich regions were also among its most economically deprived — because the institutional infrastructure for exercising rights, accessing healthcare, educating children, and organising livelihoods had never been built for them. NBJK's founding mission was to build it.

Fifty-four years later, NBJK's 2024-25 Annual Report documents 3,04,000 people directly or indirectly influenced across more than 6,000 villages in 47 districts of Jharkhand and Bihar. The Annual Report 2023-24 documents the same cumulative reach with the same specificity: not aspirational targets, but field data from 36 districts of consistent operation.

Who They Are

Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra is headquartered in Hazaribagh, Jharkhand, with a dedicated team of over 650 professionals including management experts, doctors, civil engineers, community workers, and activists. Their integrated rural development approach — Gandhian in philosophy, technically rigorous in practice — spans livelihood, education, health, community empowerment, and advocacy.

Their network extends through Lok Samiti — a platform of more than 300 NGOs in Bihar and Jharkhand that NBJK maintains and convenes to raise issues of social concern: liquor abuse, inter-faith peace and harmony, electoral reform, women's safety. This network makes NBJK a civil society infrastructure organisation as well as a direct service organisation.

The Eye Hospitals: 2 Lakh People, Free Cataract Surgery

NBJK runs three eye hospitals — a flagship 120-bed facility in Hazaribagh and 10 Vision Centres

across the region. Their eye health programme provides community eye screening, free cataract surgery for ending avoidable blindness, and rehabilitation for persons with visual disabilities.

The 2023-24 Annual Report documents 309 outreach screening camps, 14,822 OPD patients, 5,685 cataract detections, and 3,959 cataract surgeries. Over 2 lakh people receive benefits from NBJK's eye health programme. The Bridgestone Mobility Social Impact Award 2022 — with a Rs 10 lakh prize — specifically recognised their work in "restoring eyesight to rural poor suffering from avoidable blindness and improving their mobility, social life, access to education and livelihood opportunities." The connection between vision and livelihood is the specific insight the award recognises: a farmer or artisan who cannot see cannot work.

Lakhpati Kisan — The Smart Village Programme

NBJK's flagship livelihood programme is Lakhpati Kisan (Millionaire Farmer) — a smart village programme that integrates high-value agriculture training, watershed management, SHG and microcredit facilitation, and employment-linked skill training to enable farmers to cross the lakh rupee annual income threshold.

The programme won the Jharkhand ChangeMaker Award from NEEDS, Deoghar in November 2023 for transformative impact in Khunti district. The 2024-25 Annual Report documents implementation across five Jharkhand districts: Hazaribagh, Ramgarh, Giridih, Khunti, and West Singhbhum. Tata Trusts' CInI (Collective for Integrated Livelihood Initiatives) is a documented implementation partner.

Education: 5 High Schools, 2 Primary Schools, 30 Remedial Coaching Centres

NBJK runs 5 high schools and 2 primary schools, with over 4,000 rural children studying in their institutions. Beyond formal schools, they operate NFE (Non-Formal Education) centres and Remedial Coaching Centres across 30 locations — specifically targeting girls in Jharkhand's government village high schools whose academic performance needs structured support.

The 2023-24 Annual Report documents that 30 Remedial Coaching Centres specifically "enhance the quality of education and academic performance of girls." This combination — formal schools for those who can attend, remedial coaching for those in the government system but falling behind — is the kind of comprehensive education support that government alone cannot provide.

The Mobile Health Unit in Bihar

In Gaya, Bihar, NBJK implements SBI Sanjeevani — Clinic on Wheels, supported by SBI Foundation. During 2024-25, the Mobile Medical Unit conducted 488 health camps across 20 villages in Bodhgaya and Sadar blocks, facilitating 8,706 OPD consultations and reaching over

50,000 people with free medical services. The mobile health model is particularly relevant for Odisha NGOs serving dispersed rural populations where fixed health facilities are absent.

Why This Matters for Odisha

NBJK's conditions — tribal communities in mineral-rich but institutionally poor districts, high rates of avoidable blindness, out-migration, agricultural underperformance — are directly analogous to Odisha's tribal districts. Their 54-year integrated development model is the most relevant long-term reference available for NGOs in Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Malkangiri, or Koraput that are asking: what does sustained presence in a tribal district actually look like over decades?

Contact and Further Reading

Website: nbjk.org | **Contact:** Hazaribagh, Jharkhand headquarters | Annual Reports: 2023-24 and 2024-25 available as PDFs

Key evidence:

- NBJK 2024-25 Annual Report: nbjk.org — 6,000 villages, 47 districts, Lakhpati Kisan, eye hospitals
- NBJK 2023-24 Annual Report: 309 screening camps, 3,959 cataract surgeries, remedial coaching
- Benevity: 300,000 direct beneficiaries annually, 650+ professional staff
- NBJK news: SBI Sanjeevani Mobile Medical Unit — 488 camps, 50,000 people reached

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