

## **SatlujSanjeevaniSewa– A Lifeline of Rural Healthcare**

'Basic healthcare at your doorstep' was a pioneering initiative introduced by SJVN in the villages surrounding its first and India's largest Nathpa Jhakri Hydro Power Project in Himachal Pradesh way back in January 2005. To cater to the medical needs of its employees and the people living in the surrounding villages, the company had opened a small hospital in its township in Jhakri. And in order to reach out to the patients who could not reach the hospital, mobile medical units were deployed to visit the project affected areas periodically.

Later in 2012, on the occasion of its Silver Jubilee, as many as seven more mobile medical units were pressed into service. The fleet of these medical units has now reached 17 and the service has become the frontline for securing better health for many in the states of Uttarakhand, Bihar and Maharashtra besides Himachal Pradesh. .

These Mobile Medical Units named 'SatlujSanjeevaniSewa' are today rendering regular services in 117 Gram Panchayats across 12 districts of four states and stopping by 253 community service locations. These SJVN Mobile Health Units (MHU) that are currently operating in rural areas, making weekly rounds to several centers and service delivery points.

The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program is a huge success and SJVN continues to lend it support by engaging Help Age India on a multi-year basis to deliver the last mile service.

Each MMU is equipped with basic diagnostic test equipment with a qualified medical staff comprising a doctor, pharmacist and a social protection officer. Besides providing free medical check-up and free medical tests, all the medicines given to patients are free as no cost is charged for this service.

About the types of patients encountered, Dr Manoj Sen, working with a MMU in the Natpha-Jhakri project area says, "many patients that we came across have been suffering from diabetes or high blood pressure but were unaware about it, till our team identified it and started the treatment." Dr Sen has been making weekly visits to 22 community service locations that serve 32 village of Shimla and Kinnaur district and caters to a population of about 13,000 residents. Kalayan Singh, the social protection officer with the unit informs that over 48,000 people had availed treatment in the block from the MMU since it began operating in August, 2016.

For Narbada Devi Sharma, a 66-year-old woman from Ranod Broh in Nirmand block of Kullu district, the MHU service has proved to be a life giver. A diabetic patient with high blood pressure, she had even suffered a paralytic stroke. Treatments availed at Rampur, Shimla and Chandigarh had only partially improved her condition, but it was after attending a SJVN run free medical camp in 2018 that a MMU began to make a regular visit to check her blood pressure and sugar level at her residence.

In the words of Narbada, “the SJVN medical team monitors my health condition at my residence regularly and also gives me my weekly dose of medicines. The effects of the paralysis attack are gone and I have recovered so much that I don’t need to depend on anybody for my regular needs.”

Dola Devi, a 55-year-old woman from Pashni village of Nirmand block in Kullu district, is a diabetic patient who is under treatment with a SJVN run MMU for the past 10 years. “In all these years,” she says, “my sugar levels are under control and in fact the medicine doses have been reduced.”

For 79-year-old Manmohan Singh of Shah village in Jhakri valley, the MMU’s weekly check-up visit and medicine distribution for the past 3 years has kept his blood pressure levels in control. “It would not have been possible without the dedication of the MMU team,” he says.

On 3rd August 2019, the MMU service was extended to the villages of Moorang, Spillo, Purbani, Karla, Kanam and Powari in Kinnaur district. Holding charge of the Kinnaur MMU, Dr Jatinder Mehta says that their unit is holding weekly clinics at different stations at these places. “After doing a check-up of the patients, running some basic tests and on the basis of the diagnosis arrived at, medicines are being provided and all of it is free of cost to the patients,” said Dr Mehta.

By November 2021 an accumulated total of 10,20,358 patients, with 5,37,543 (52.68%) of them being females and 482815 (47.32%) males, have been treated by the MMU service since it was started.

Other than treating patients, Satluj Sanjeevani Sewa MHUs from time to time is also conducting health awareness camps where information about drug addiction, tuberculosis, HIV and COVID-19 is shared with the public.



