
Welcome 'CHIKITSAKS'

Volunteer 'Healers'

'Sw:asth' Eco-health Resource Centre

DEODAR HIMALAYAN PROGRAM • Health • Education • Environment



Chimchimpani, P.O. Surmane via Mukteshwar, NAINITAL, Pin 263138, Uttarkhand, INDIA

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About 'Chintan'

... reflective thought with a purpose

THOUGHT INTO ACTION

Chintan - reflective thought with a purpose, started with the thoughts of a few people, inspired by Himalayan journeys and the challenges of healthcare in the Himalayas. These have grown into Chintan International Trust, a non profit, non religious, non political organization with a humanitarian mission registered in London 2008 & Delhi 2009, working in Himalaya.



Women's Day at Gahna Village



patients at Sw:asth Centre,



Dr Mrinalini Mani

How we have worked

Our vision is to see people develop a meaningful quality of life in every sphere of their lives. Chintan is about empowering individuals to make a transforming contribution to society in partnership with groups, communities and organizations.

We have worked through volunteers, made up of families, groups and individuals, who relate together. We are not defined by space or geographical boundaries, but by lifestyle and relationship. Those involved with Chintan work together through shared relationships, shared values and a shared vision. We all find a value in our relationships with each other and this helps each of us to do what we do individually more effectively. Not only can we share our individual resources, but having supportive and accountable relationships provides a stable platform to work and grow towards our common goal.

We have, simply through these thoughts, facilitated the **healthcare of well over 3000** needy mainly rural women, reached to **over 1000 village folk in** community **environmental** programs & **over 500 children** in educational programs. Our main work is in the Himalaya and we hope to achieve a network with shared values from grassroots to highest levels of advocacy.

About 'Deodar'

HIMALAYAN ECO-HEALTH PROGRAM

*HEALTH * EDUCATION * ENVIRONMENT

Our eco-health approach - Human health and well-being of people in the hills, is dependent on many factors, and is also an important outcome of effective ecosystem management. Forests, rivers, fields, animals and people's lives are bound in an intricate web of relationship. We work with an ethos conscious of the interactions between people, society and ecosystems in the context of the sociocultural and traditional knowledge of people in the Himalaya.



Deodar, the Himalayan Cedar

Status of health especially amongst the women, children and the poor marginalized communities is inadequate. We work to address this with a holistic and trans-disciplinary approach.

Deodar Himalayan Program

This integrated program of Health, leads on human health but also seeks to make links with animal and plant health. Education is a primary strategy and Environmental concerns are central to all our work in the rural Himalaya. Our key focus areas are:

Health: providing primary, promotive and preventive services with remote outreach. Specialist health services through health 'camps'. Education and training for health & social workers.

Education: school health activities, promoting science in schools, practical application of knowledge, career guidance & life skills programs with activities empowering local teachers.

Environment: interactive education for protection of Himalayan Environment, promoting biodiversity, action on non-biodegradable waste, action research on climate change, promoting traditional knowledge & heritage and developing local resource based livelihood avenues.

About 'Chikitsaks'

Volunteers with Chintan

'HEALERS' IN HIMALAYA

WHO ?

We are an evolving group of people inspired to work for the service of humanity in diverse ways towards common goal. 'Chikitsak' was the ancient sanskrit term for a healer. In our eco-health approach of 'sewa', service to humanity & earth, we interpret the term liberally and such a healer may be a doctor, veterinarian, agriculturist, forestry or environmental specialist and so on... Healer may be in an alternative system of medicine, musician, artist, social scientist, development practitioners on any issue related to social development.

Essential criteria is one of service to humanity or earth in any way !



Katherine 'on the rocks' Dr Jennifer Pond 'evidence based' Dr Sonia Chery 'life changing'

HOW ?

Chintan was a concept that became a reality only due to the efforts of volunteers. Jayna was our first student volunteer in Delhi, Katherine 'the brave' became our first student volunteer in the Himalayas by her sheer enthusiasm! We had started with a women's health project and unsurprisingly our first volunteers were all ladies, Dr Kusum Sood, retired navy doctor helped us with our first health 'camp' in 2007. Dr Jennifer Pond GP from Northumberland was our first volunteer resident doctor, though Dr Sonia Chery GP trainee from Warwick, got to Himalaya first! Dr Sireesa joined our team and they became the first resident lady doctors in our area in over two decades.

In 2008-2009, we helped staff a health service and staff a new rural hospital. Dr Shagufta Yasmeen, Gynaecologist & Dr Sarkar Haider cardiologist, Dr Amit Dewan, dentist helped

'CHIKITSAK' WELCOME PACK

start visiting specialist services. Dr Mrinalini Mani, Gynaecologist & her team of junior doctors started a new way of education. We worked on all aspects of health, including education, research & training and introduced new standards in evidence based medicine, organized the first medical meeting of the area. We still had to connect all this to the 'grassroots' ...

Dr Reetu Sogani Phd in environmental management, helped us with the much needed 'eco-health approach' organizing the first Community Needs Assessment study in Gahana 2009, World Heritage Day and 'Science through Toys'. Mrs Anuradha Saxena, Principal of our local primary and her very enthusiastic pupils, became the source of much joy in our activities on nature & education. Local residents Mr Ganesh Bora, village head Ms Kavita and over 500 others helped in making a massive clearance of non-biodegradable waste in 2010.



Dr Prachi Renjhen, Gynaecologist, Dr Tanupriya Ghosh ITU Phy, Dr Daya Misra 'retired'

Dr Prachi helped Chintan start the first women's health initiative working directly with the community, which proved to be really popular with over 80 women turning up in a single day! Dr Tanupriya Ghosh joined us for a health camp in Nov 2010 and stayed on in Himalaya through winter to help Chintan take on the challenge of starting a new health service. Joining us out of retirement, Dr Daya Misra, celebrated her eightieth birthday, on this mission!

What dedicated volunteers can achieve: 'Mission Impossible 2011'

'Mission Impossible' - to start up a health centre and village health service with no funding or support, armed with just our skills, dedication and counting on the goodwill of people. Our initial start was in a donated space that was formerly a motorcycle garage! Incredible it may seem, but that is how it happened. Local youth donated their time to its cleaning, painting & electrical wiring. Local residents chipped in with a donations of furniture - table, bed, cupboard, shelving, items were then painted & curtains hung, all by volunteers. We dug into our pockets, made trips to Delhi, found yet more wonderful people who helped us get the cheapest prices on medicines & essential equipment. With no place to live or work, no funding, we had made a start to a health service, all in the space of a week!! It is an incredible (long) story that continued to evolve with more donations of space, wood, furniture, into what is now Sw:asth eco-health centre, a lot of which, we have literally made with our own hands !!!

About the 'Sw:asth' Kendra

helping holistic health development

HIMALAYAN ECO-HEALTH CENTRE

Sw-asth, is the original holistic concept of health. 'Sw' in sanskrit is self and we are working on promoting health as an outcome of complete self awareness in relationship to our environment. We do treat disease, particularly helping needy rural women, but focus on promotive & preventive health as well. We are promoting traditional nutritious foods & healthy lifestyles relating to healthy agricultural & environmental practices in the context of our agri-forestry based rural populations. Education is at the core of all we do & this centre is to develop into a repository resource for like minded individuals, groups & a part of community.



(L-R) Naveenji, Dr Reetu, Dr Satyen, Dr Sood (inaugurated the centre), Mrs Bhagwati

Physically it is a small place that has a waiting verandah, a small reception, a primary health clinic and a meeting room. Kendra meaning centre, is the focal point which brings together our diverse activities in health, education & environment. It acts, on a micro level to connect to our village of main activity - Malla Gehna. On a macro level, it seeks to bring together all efforts in human, animal & plant health in the region as the Mukteshwar eco-health network.

'Surya Sushma' volunteer home

Integrated in the centre is also our volunteer home, the name meaning 'soft rays of sun' was given by our most senior volunteer Dr Daya Misra. It has two bedrooms and a kitchen opening out into the back verandah that gets the morning sun, perfect for breakfast. The south living room is the sun room with windows on three sides and views of spectacular sunsets, stars above and twinkling lights in the big valley below appearing like stars on the ground ...

Sw:asth ecohealth centre • email: chintanhimalaya@gmail.com •

Where we are

Chintan Ecohealth Centre or Sw:asth Kendra, is quite conveniently located at Chimchimpani Surmane, just next to the road, about three kilometers before Mukteshwar where the road terminates, in the Nainital (lake district) of the north Indian state of Uttarakhand. Mukteshwar was a small sleepy, not even a village, but of late there has been a big tourist influx bringing amenities (and problems). A grocery shop (supplying basic items) cum restaurant is situated just above our house. Mohan Market, two kilometers away is a small market catering to the needs of day to day requirements of people living in that area, including a veterinary institute. It has shops supplying vegetables, fruits, grocery items, household items, and couple of sweet shops and increasing numbers of restaurants, half a kilometer further from Mohan market, is located IVRI Campus, bank and a post office, leading on to the walk up to the highest point about 8,000 ft, the ancient Mukteshwar temple. This and a unique rock formation overlooking the vast valley below with a drop of about 2000ft is what draws in the tourists.

Our working area is in the villages below, an approximate population of 50,000 spread out on small step farms with livestock. We cover some of this area by outreach camps & networking clinics, but the focus for all our eco-health activities is a village is close by. Malla Gehna is a small village (hamlet of Gehna revenue village). It is a small village comprising approx. 700 people. Our recently constituted women's group is called 'Gehna Behna Samuh' (Gehna Sister's Group) We work closely with this group, with Madhawi (ASHA worker) the secretary, Vimla (Chairperson) and Hema (Treasurer) are the other important members of the group.

What we expect of volunteers: Roles & Responsibilities

- We expect our volunteer to be one who has a powerful motivation for service of humanity from within, ready to live in difficult conditions, if need be. Practice "*simple living and high thinking*" as a grassroots worker, who is able to go to the people and live amongst them.
- Understand Chintan's mission, eco-health approach, try to understand the region, people, their culture and traditions, dress, behave & empathize in a culturally sensitive way.
- The work schedule will be followed as discussed, volunteers will be working five days with Saturdays for report writing or training, doctors have charge of medicines & equipment.
- 'Surya Sushma' is free of charge for Chintan volunteers, rooms may be shared at times. Volunteers will keep it clean, alcohol free, vegetarian, no drugs & respect 'rules of the house'.
- We encourage everyone associated with Chintan or staying at the centre, to try to consume locally produced, traditional, organic food where possible. Arrangements have been made for cooking, food can be provided, volunteers to take care of their own food and expenses.

Joining as 'Chikitsak'

Giving, the greatest gift one can give to oneself !

AN AGREEMENT OF VOLUNTARY SERVICE

Chintan has been founded by volunteers, and has grown entirely on voluntary effort. All Chintan office bearers are honorary and all members help as volunteers as well. We do pay a few needy local people in Himalaya for their help but still most of our work even in the villages has come about with voluntary effort. If you feel powerfully motivated from 'within' Join Us !

While any and all efforts by volunteers are appreciated, we do need an agreement to be signed by all short & long term volunteers with a responsible member of the Chintan team.

Agreement:

I _____ agree to work with Chintan International Trust as per the directions of the responsible person purely on a voluntary basis, with no monetary incentive, from the period _____ till _____.

I understand the roles & responsibilities of 'Chikitsak/student 'Chikitsak' including documenting & reporting on the work/ project as required.

I agree to abide by the 'rules of the house', if staying in the 'Surya Sushma' volunteer home.

I agree that I am volunteering entirely at my own risk. Chintan International Trust cannot be held responsible for any kind of incident causing damage to my person or property.

Signed /Dated
(name in capitals)
Volunteer 'Chikitsak'

Signed /Dated
On behalf of
Chintan International Trust

Please give one signed copy for Chintan records along with a copy of your recent CV

'CHIKITSAK' WELCOME PACK

Getting to us

DRIVING: We are about a 9 hour drive from Delhi, mostly on a good national highway, but the last bit before you reach the hills is often on a challenging potholed road. Driving in the hills is actually the best part, so long as you don't get car sick! We would recommend a professional driver with a reliable car and an early start to avoid the morning traffic jams. Taxis are available from Delhi for a steep price of course.

TRAINS: are available from Delhi to Kathgodam in the foothills, busy in peak summer times.

Ranikhet Express is an overnight train from Old Delhi Railway Station with sleepers, with air-conditioning and first class options, reaching very early morning at Kathgodam.

Shatabadi Express from Anand Vihar Railway Station in east Delhi, starts (very!) early morning reaching Kathgodam late morning/early afternoon in comfortable air conditioned chair cars is most recommended.

From Kathgodam taxis to Mukteshwar taking about 2 - 2 1/2 hours, are the best option for most, buses & shared 'jeep taxis' usually with changes are cheaper but take longer.

BUSES: are available from Anand Vihar, best to look for the overnight luxury 'Volvo' buses to Nainital, though another option is for Haldwani. Regular roadways buses with changes, are an option for the hardy.

Contacts: Delhi & Himalaya Chintan International Trust

Delhi Phone: +91 965092723

Lead Trustee - Padmabhusan Prof R B Singh (NAAS, Delhi)

Lead 'Chikitsak' Prof Chintamani (VMMC, Delhi)

Lead Himalayan Program - Dr Reetu Sogani (9811222495)

Treasurer - Mrs Shashi Singh (9560464407) Address : A-13 Pushpanjali Delhi

Himalaya : Chintan International Trust,

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We will usually discuss with you beforehand and especially for the new, arrange a pick up.

'Blessings Base': 229, Vasant Enclave New Delhi 11057, Mrs C M Singh has been blessing all our volunteers, often a first port of call (o)11 26143158 Logistics: Mr Ram Prasad 9013276239