

ALOK, Bahuarwa, West Champaran District, Bihar

It was in 1985 that a group of volunteers began working in some of the most remote and backward rural parts of West Champaran District, Bihar. Initially for more than 2 years the group was involved in the areas of Education and Use of Traditional Media through Puppetry and Street plays. ALOK was registered as a voluntary organisation in 1987 and has since then taken up initiatives in the following areas :

Water and Sanitation

ALOK has collected more than 300 water samples from 80 villages for testing fluoride and other chemical content. Based on the test findings efforts were made to mobilise the rural communities in raising their awareness about Water and Sanitation. Steps are taken by ALOK during every monsoon to disseminate information about issues related to water, sanitation and health through puppet shows and street plays in 40 villages . Popularising the use and growing of medicinal plants as well as herbs is an on-going health concern of ALOK.

Education

Presently ALOK co-ordinates 80 night schools in 10 panchayats of East and West Champaran District which are attended by more than 2400 children.

A team of 50 trained barefoot teachers are involved in 30 government primary schools that are attended by 698 boys and 429 girls.

Book Bank

Since 1997 ALOK has taken the initiative of established Book Banks that have a total membership of 193 boys and 41 girls apart from 1300 persons in 52 villages using its facilities.

Library

ALOK has been popularising the reading habit amongst children and members of the rural communities by establishing 4 public reading room cum libraries which has 692 members and a readership of 9243 persons.

A mobile library visits villages regularly and distributes books to 1145 persons.

ALOK has a collection 10,719 books and journals in its libraries.

Empowerment

ALOK volunteers is closely involved with rural communities in settling family and personal disputes within the village to avoid costly and time-consuming litigation. They have settled 2018 such disputes and solved 156 lengthy court cases.

Use of Traditional Media

Over the years ALOK has established 3 teams of barefoot communicators consisting of children, youth and adults. Each of these teams have visited 196 villages in 76 panchayats of 5 districts in Bihar presenting puppet shows, street plays and songs to discuss issues like Education, Social evils, superstitions and beliefs, Environmental Regeneration, Moneylending, Child Marriage and Dowry.

Training and Capacity Building

Semi-literate and literate rural men and women are trained each year in groups as barefoot librarian, teachers, solar engineers, communicators. Training and capacity building initiatives are also taken up for members of Village Education Committees, Village Energy and Environment Committees and Women's, Self Help Groups.