

RAJ DADIJI HER HIGHNESS BADAN KANWAR MEDICAL TRUST  
UMAID BHAWAN PALACE, JODHPUR.

# RAJDADIJI VEERNI PROJECT

(A Women's Empowerment Project  
Funded by the Global Foundation for Humanity, U.K., & U.S.A)



## COMBINED ANNUAL REPORT

(1<sup>st</sup> April 2004 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006)

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES:**

H H Maharaja Gaj Singh II of Jodhpur  
H H Maharani Hemlata Rajye  
H H Rajmata Krishna Kumari

**NAMES OF MEMBERS OF ADVISORY BOARD:**

Brig Shakti Singhji, Director Cum Co-ordinator  
Ms Jacqueline de Chollet, Director (UK, USA)  
Ms Maja Daruwala, Director (Delhi)  
Mr. Prakash Detha, Director  
Dr K.C. Joshi, Medical Director

**VEERNI TEAM :**

Dr Usha Bhargava, Project Doctor  
Ms Rashmi Rathore, Nutritonist  
Mr. Moolchand Khichi, Social Scientist  
Mr. Mahendra Sharma, Accountant Cum Asst. Administrator  
Mr. Parbat Singh, Administrator Cum Field Supervisor  
Ms Jaspal Kaur, Filed Supervisor  
Ms Manokamna, A.N.M.  
Ms Vimlesh Sharma, G.N.M.  
Ms Santosh Chajjer, Field Educator  
Mr. Parbat Singh Bhati, Driver & Field Assistant  
Mr. Sajjan Singh, Driver & Field Assistant  
Mr. Multan Singh, Office Worker

**SUPPORTED BY:**

Promoters in each village (mostly ladies)  
Sewing and Education teachers  
Self Help Groups like the Mahilla (ladies') Mandals, and  
Yuva (young boys & girls') Mandals.

## **MESSAGE**

Veerni in association with Global Foundation for Humanity is doing a commendable job for more than a decade now: improving the quality of life of women in rural areas of Jodhpur. The best part of this effort is that Veerni is accomplishing its mission by virtue of empowering women and not just extending an aid and making them dependent on such assistance.

I have personally been part of this noble cause since the inception of this project and I am impressed by the achievements and the progress shown. Adoption of new villages every year has expanded the horizon of this project to a good extent and the kind of faith and support people have shown in the project is appreciable. The team is continuously improvising on its efforts and approach and I am quite sure of greater achievements in the coming years.

Many thanks to the Global Foundation of Humanity for its valuable support because of which Veerni could not have made this happen. I would be delighted to see more people coming up to extend their help and be part of this noble cause. I wish the entire Veerni team the best of success in their future endeavour.

**GAJ SINGH-II  
MAHARAJA OF JODHPUR**

## **MESSAGE**

I have personally visited many villages a number of times. Gender discrimination and lack of involvement of ladies in decision-making is quite apparent. Rural women are not just financially dependent on males but their health is also a neglected aspect.

Veerni's effort to improve the quality of life of these women by empowering them is a much needed initiative, especially in this part of the world. Many times I have personally participated in Veerni activities and the impact of their efforts is quite noticeable and appreciable. One can notice the kind of self reliance and confidence the ladies portray after getting assistance from Veerni.

I thank all who are associated with this project and request more people to be part of this noble cause, I wish The Veerni Team all success in their endeavour to improve the quality of life of rural women of the Marwar region.

**Hemlata Rajye  
MAHARANI OF JODHPUR**

## MESSAGE

For over a decade, the Veerni Project has been operating in the villages of the Thar Desert in the Northwest Indian State of Rajasthan. Veerni's ongoing commitment is to women and girls' empowerment and wellbeing through a series of projects in health, education and human development.

As Eleanor Roosevelt wrote in *The Great Question* (1958), "Where, after all, do human rights begin? In small places, so close and so small they cannot be seen on any map of the world." We at the Veerni Project are convinced that human rights begin in the Veerni villages, where women and young girls seek equal justice, equal opportunity and equal dignity in order to live healthy, productive lives.

Increasingly, Veerni feels that education and economic independence for girls and women are the key to social change.

As mothers, we must care about all the children of the world—especially the girls. In so many countries and communities, girls do not have the opportunities and choices that our daughters have. We need to fight for the right of girls to receive an education because we all know that if you educate a girl, you educate a community and a nation. As mothers, making this dream a reality for millions of girls must be our priority.

Veerni's secondary education program for girls, consisting of village-based education centres and scholarships for a Jodhpur boarding school, is the star program of the project. Secondary education for girls is the most important road to social change in the future and is the key to the empowerment of women.

In the words of Kalpana a student from one of the Veerni villages, "*Veerni changed my life; because of Veerni, I will continue my studies and would like to become a police officer and fight against the dowry system*".

For some of these girls, their dream of a career is now within their reach.

The work of the Veerni Project is made possible by the continuing and invaluable support of our patrons Gaj Singh, Maharaja of Jodhpur, Hemlata Rajye, Maharani of Jodhpur. I would like to thank the members of the Advisory Council of the Veerni Project for their wisdom and advice. My very special thanks go to Brigadier Shakti Singh, Director and coordinator who oversees the project, and Dr. K.C. Joshi, our medical advisor, who provides guidance on medical activities. I also wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the devoted staff of the Veerni Project for their contribution to the work of the organization and to the village representatives, both women and men who provide ongoing support at the local level. I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Johnson-Lans from Vassar College for her important work in conducting a research project in the Veerni villages. As a result of her research, Veerni has been able to focus on the areas where it has been most successful and to plan more effectively for the future.

I would also like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the many contributors who provide financial and moral support and ensure the continued existence of the Veerni Project. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the board members of the Global Foundation for Humanity US and the Global Foundation for Humanity UK for their enthusiasm and commitment to the work of the Veerni Project.

Jacqueline de Chollet

## Foreword

In Hindi, Veerni means heroine or woman of strength. The project name itself depicts its core belief that only when women are healthy and aware, do they have the strength to create change in their lives and in their communities.

The Veerni project was founded almost a decade ago by Ms Jacqueline de Chollet with a vision of improving the lives of rural women of Jodhpur, not just by giving them aid but also by empowering them and making them self sufficient.

The project addresses health action through activities that are women centred. It targets specific areas to help create community based empowerment. Our mission focuses on medical, income generation and educational programs.

This project is of 'ongoing nature' as every year we drop the self sufficient villages and adopt the new ones to make them self sufficient. Apart from the efforts of highly motivated core team it's the associated entities like *Global Foundation for Humanity* that have enabled the project to fulfill its objective.

This annual report gives the activities from 01 April 2004 to 31 March 2006. It starts with the illustration of the real picture of rural India and introduction to the Veerni project, its team, process and its mission & objectives. Section 'Physical Interventions 2004-06' highlights the major activities carried out by the team specifically in the area of trainings, women empowerment, health services and social services. Towards the end are the financials for the year and major conclusions.

Such periodic reports not only enable us to appraise our efforts and reorient our plans for the coming period but also gives us an opportunity to convey the progress of this noble effort to the potential donors.

I extend my gratitude to His Highness The Maharaja and Maharani Sahiba of Jodhpur for their invaluable support and help to initiate and facilitate this project.

My grateful thanks to Ms. Jacqueline de Chollet, the founder of Veerni and Global Foundation for Humanity for not only funding us but spending her invaluable time by visiting all villages with the Veerni Team twice a year over a period of six weeks each time. Without her support Veerni couldn't achieve what it has.

I am confident that this project will make every village self-reliant and will become a role model for other rural areas across the Marwar Region.

I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to one and all who share our vision to contribute in this noble cause, to come forward and strengthen us by becoming associated with the Veerni Project

**Brig (Retd.) Shakti Singh**  
**Director Cum Co-ordinator**

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