



Shri Onkar Singh Memorial Trust®

(Public Charitable Trust)

B-12 NBT Apartments, Mayur Vihar, Phase - I, Delhi-110 091 (India) Tel.: 91-11-22752678

Free Surgical cum Medical Camp – A Report

(October 13, 2024 to October 19, 2024)

The *Shri Onkar Singh Memorial Trust (SOSMT)* conducted its sixty-seventh free surgical cum medical camp at the remote hilly town of Bani in the Kathua district of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir from October 13, 2024 to October 19, 2024. The camp was conducted in the Sub-District Hospital Bani. The Trust had earlier conducted two such camps at this venue, one in the year 2004 and the second in 2005. This area harbours some of the very poor patients who can ill afford good medical treatment. The place has this one government hospital here which does not have a regular surgeon on its roll. The government hospital at Basohli where we held our last camp in August this year is at a distance of some ninety kilometres from here, but there too there is no regular surgeon. Good medical facilities are available at Kathua, the nearest district hospital, which is over 170 kilometres from here and is about four and a half hours drive by the mountainous road. This place is over 250 kilometres from Jammu, and a drive of nearly six hours.

The Background

Bani is a small, remote, and beautiful hilly town surrounded by the mountains. Our two earlier camps here, nearly two decades ago, had given us a good experience of serving some of the most deserving poor patients. The people here are simple, gentle and very decent. We had long desired to get back to this place whenever it was convenient. We were fortunate that the administration at the Kathua district showed their keenness to give us an opportunity to serve these people. When we held our last camp at Basohli in August 2024, the demand for our next camp at Bani was made, and we readily agreed. The place is eminently suited for our mission of serving the poor and the needy, in far flung areas, at their doorstep.

The Spadework

Dr Charak and Tarun Gupta visited the Sub-District Hospital Bani on the 20th of September 2024. There is a small hospital here which has not evolved much during the last two decades. The only advantage this time for us was that the small stream which separated the town from the hospital had a motorable bridge now. During our last camp, we had to manually transport our heavy equipment (operation tables, OR lights, surgical instruments, cautery and suction machines, etc.) across this rivulet via a narrow bridge over it. A small new block for indoor patients has now come up, reducing the already scanty space in the hospital. The operation theatre is still the same small room where we would accommodate two operation tables to meet the rush of the surgical patients. Transporting patients from the operation theatre to the ward would need some innovative solution as there are steps at the entry point to the operation room, and there are steps at several places between the operation theatre and the post-operative ward which is some distance away. Accommodation for the team would be some problem. We discussed these problems with the Block Medical Officer (BMO) who was very cooperative

and helpful. He offered good solutions for our concerns, and we were satisfied. We realised that there were numerous limitations of the place but we would have to deal with all these problems. Once we knew our limitations, we could take steps to overcome them.

Dr Charak and Tarun returned to Nouggran where we have stored our surgical instruments, surgical consumables, OR linen, and other related material. Medicines for anaesthesia and for the OPD would be arranged for us by our man 'Gangu' here. Our ambulance would carry all the necessary material from Nouggran to Bani for our camp there. Some volunteers from Nouggran would also join us at Bani.

Official permission for the camp had already been taken from the Director Health Services at Jammu, and from the CMO Kathua. The Directorate of Health Services at Jammu has been associated with us for several years and they are aware of the tremendously benevolent work that our team has been doing, now for the last twenty-five years.

Arrival at Bani: Setting up the Camp

This time our team from Delhi was the smallest in the last twenty-five years. Our first camp had only fifteen members, the smallest team until now. But the present team consisted of only thirteen members. There was only one surgeon, only one gynaecologist, only one physician, only one OR nurse and only one OR technician. Dr Sawhney, usually our sole anaesthetist, luckily had some support this time. There was one anaesthetist, Dr Liaqat, posted at Bani hospital who provided his services willingly during our camp activities and was a great support to Dr Sawhney.

Our team left Delhi on the evening of October 12, 2024 to reach Kathua station in the early hours of October 13. From there, they travelled to Bani by the transport provided by the office of the CMO at Kathua. After a road journey of some four and a half hours, the team reached the Bani hospital. The team members were accommodated in a couple of small hotels, in this small hilly town, on the other side of the stream. Dr Vijay Dutta, our physician had some trouble with his knee joint (a meniscal tear!) and was accommodated in the quarters of the BMO inside the hospital premises. There was an addition to the SOSMT family also. Dr Aboli Waghmare from Pune, right now an intern, who has qualified from Ukraine, joined us for the first time. We hope she participates in our future camps too.

Camp Activities

A total of 943 patients attended our OPD. We had several patients who had been suffering for years without being able to get appropriate medical or surgical treatment for their ailments. A total of forty-five surgical procedures, twenty-seven of them major, were performed during the five operative days (from Monday to Friday). Dr Achala Batra, the gynaecologist, single-handedly performed five hysterectomies. Nine patients had surgery for gall stones. By the end of Friday, our last operating day, there were several patients who needed surgery but could not be accommodated during the short span of our camp. We have requested them to wait till we organise our next camp here, which we are planning soon again, perhaps sometime during the first half of the next year. We had some interesting medical cases that needed not only medication but a good counselling which Dr Dutta provided with exceptional empathy. He befriended many of such patients with his kind approach.

The overall statistics of the camp are as follows:

1. Total outdoor attendance	943
2. Total indoor admissions	29
3. Total number of surgical procedures	45
o Major surgical procedures (necessitating general or spinal anaesthesia)	27
o Minor surgical procedures (requiring local/regional anaesthesia; including sebaceous cysts, lipomas, ingrowing toe nails, urethral dilatation, etc.)	18
4. Major surgical procedures: A breakup (27 cases)	
• Abdominal (Cholecystectomy 9, Minilap 1)	10
• Head & Neck (Branchial cyst 1)	2
• Gynaecological (Hysterectomy Vaginal 3, Abdominal 2)	5
• Urological (Vaginal Hydrocoele 1)	1
• Inguinal Hernia (Littre's 1)	7
• Ano-rectal (Haemorrhoidectomy 1)	1
• Infective (Large bilateral gluteal injection abscesses 1)	1

Return to Delhi

Bani being a far off place, we had to start early for Delhi on Saturday, October 19. We finished our work early, discharged our patients and started off from Bani at around 11 AM. This time we changed our return journey plan and drove to Pathankot in Punjab. From there, we took the Vande Bharat Express train to Delhi and reached Delhi around 11 PM on the same day.

Future Plans

We have already conducted four surgical cum medical camps this year. This is our usual number. We had planned an additional camp in November-December 2024 in a place called Barsana near Mathura in Uttar Pradesh. However, the venue could not be made suitable for the camp in time. So this plan is now postponed till sometime next year.

October 25, 2024



S K Mehta

Chairman, SOS Memorial Trust



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So far...

Here is a summary of the services rendered by the *Shri Onkar Singh Memorial Trust* through the holding of free surgical cum medical camps starting from the year 2000.

Venue-Duration	OPD Attendance	Indoor Admissions	Operations		
			Major	Minor	Total
First 60 camps between October 2000 and December 2022:	73,909	2,343	2,099	1,384	3,483
61. Government Medical College, Kathua, Jammu (J & K) <i>April 2, 2023 to April 8, 2023</i>	359	23	23	12	35
62. Nouggran (Distt. Jammu, J & K) <i>October 29, 2023 to November 4, 2023</i>	261	18	18	27	45
63. Vindhyachal (Distt. Mirzapur, UP) <i>November 26, 2023 to December 2, 2023</i>	599	42	42	33	75
64. Tanakpur (Distt. Champawat, Uttarakhand) <i>February 25, 2024 to March 2, 2024</i>	563	20	20	37	57
65. Nouggran (Distt. Jammu, J & K) <i>March 31, 2024 to April 6, 2024</i>	605	28	28	40	68
66. Basohli (Distt. Kathua, Jammu & Kashmir) <i>August 4, 2024 to August 10, 2024</i>	922	16	15	13	28
67. Bani (Distt. Kathua, Jammu & Kashmir) <i>October 13, 2024 to October 19, 2024</i>	943	29	27	18	45
Total	78,161	2,519	2,272	1,564	3,836



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Free Surgical cum Medical Camp at Bani, Distt. Kathua (Jammu & Kashmir)

(October 13, 2024 to October 19, 2024)

Names of Participants

1. Dr K S Charak (MS, FRCS)	:	Surgeon
2. Dr R Sawhney (MD)	:	Anaesthesiologist
3. Dr Vijay Dutta (MD)	:	Physician
4. Dr Achala Batra (MD)	:	Gynaecologist
5. Dr Sampath Ganesh	:	Medical Officer
6. Dr Aboli Waghmare	:	Medical Officer
7. Pushpa Sharma	:	OR Nurse
8. Sister Shakuntala	:	Nurse
9. Miss Vrinda	:	Nurse
10. R C Yadav	:	Male Nurse
11. Munish	:	OR Technician
12. Dalbir	:	Nursing Orderly
13. Ravi Sharma	:	Volunteer
14. Jai Singh (from Nouggran)	:	Volunteer
15. Tara Singh (from Nouggran)	:	Volunteer
16. Kulwant Singh (from Nouggran)	:	Ambulance Driver
