

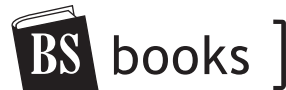
“...a remarkable story of progress and setbacks, development and liberation, participation and empowerment.”

Sir Richard Jolly, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex

“A story not to be missed.”

Syeda Hameed, Member, Planning Commission

*Rising/Utthan* is the story of a small band of volunteers who since 1981 have attempted to help communities in some of Gujarat's most difficult regions transform their lives and environments. Four young women, equipped with enthusiasm and what one of them was later to describe as “foolishness and fun,” set out for Bhal in the barren mud flats of coastal Saurashtra. Joined there by another remarkable woman leader, and soon by other women and men, they began processes and institutions which have had a profound effect on all those who have participated in them—as well as on Gujarat, India and the world beyond. This is their story, as well as of larger forces that have transformed India and the globe, leaving the struggle for justice and equity more complex than ever. *Rising* addresses all those who have an India of their dreams and a determination to work for it.



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# Rising

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## UTTHAN



AN INDIAN QUEST  
FOR DIGNITY & HOPE  
SET IN GUJARAT

ASHOKE CHATTERJEE

*Tere maathey pe ye aanchal bahaut hi khoob hai lekin  
Tu is aanchal se ek parcham bana leti to acchha tha*

This drape over your head is beautiful, but  
had you made it a banner, it would have been splendid

~ M A J A Z



size: 7.8 x 5.1 inches

pages: 204

edition: paperback

ISBN 978-93-80740-02-7

price: ₹ 395

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## PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

There are thousands of stories within independent India's effort at social transformation—stories from every part of a land that is perhaps the most diverse society in the world, and certainly its most complex and vibrant democracy. Too many of these stories are untold, their experience and learning restricted to participants alone. Rising is an exception. It comes to us as a remarkable record of Utthan's struggle, achievement and challenge within an environment as difficult as it is promising.... It is a story not to be missed.

SYEDA HAMEED, Member, Planning Commission, Government of India

...a remarkable story of progress and setbacks, development and liberation, participation and empowerment, not in generalizations but in terms of the specific experiences of this group of women, from 1981 to the present.

...Utthan was born, a social movement of solidarity—inspired by the vision of an academic, Professor Ravi Matthai, and brought to birth with the help of four women development workers, each professional and sharing the inspiration that women, when empowered, can work miracles. The women reached out to the poorest of the poor, listening, seeking to understand, and working to develop an agenda for action, not as the usual top-down development list of desirables but as a collective expression of what the community needed and what women might, and could, do about it.

All of us in development have much to learn from the story of Utthan and the reflections of others upon it.

SIR RICHARD JOLLY, University of Sussex

ASHOKE CHATTERJEE *is a volunteer working in the water and sanitation sector in India and overseas and with other development and educational institutions, including the Prabhat Education Foundation (Ahmedabad) for children with special needs. He was Executive Director of the National Institute of Design and President of the Crafts Council of India in a career that has also included the engineering industry, the International Monetary Fund and the public sector.*