



Every person should have the opportunity to live a long, healthy and happy life.



Recognizing the vital contributions of older women and promoting the inclusion of their voices, perspectives and needs are critical to creating meaningful policies.

Research reflects that mobility limitations are an important risk factor for the emergence of feelings of loneliness.



Working to make the world more age-friendly is an essential and urgent part of our changing demographics.



What does it mean to be an elderly?

Getting old is often associated with an overall decline in health and the development of various forms of limitations.

Various platforms and associations across the world have been talking about old age and older people specifying different dimensions including the issues of physical health. However, it is important, at this juncture, in the year 2022, to understand and advocate that age is not just about biological aspect of our lives, the number of years one has lived, or the physiological changes the body is going through. It is very much a consequence of the social norms and the expectations we live by in whichever socio-cultural scenario we exist.

As of today, there are many concerns in our country, which we are not willing to associate with when it comes to the situation of our elderlies. It is time we accept that we are largely moving towards a self-centered nuclear family system where the old people's presence is utilized as and when it is required.

It is in these circumstances, 'Vriddha Mitra' comes across as an intervention that should have started years ago.

Vriddha Mitra aptly amplifies the fact that significance of being elderly has to be understood appropriately by the society as a whole, so that the elderly may be considered as a social unit and not as an economic burden.

Considering the fact that increasing number and proportion of older persons is an ongoing process, it is important that opportunities must be provided to them to participate in and contribute to the ongoing activities of society. Vriddha Mitra promotes social inclusion to ensure older people live with a sense of purpose, of accomplishment and of belonging to the community. Vriddha Mitra encourages elderlies to stay active and to contribute to the development of society based on their needs, preferences and abilities.



Social participation of the elderlies is ensured through discussions with them and their families during home visits; in the community meetings and events; recreational activities, and through a fleet of services that are meant to ensure ease and comfort in their lives.

While all the interventions contribute to building an age-friendly ecosystem for the elderlies in India, the activities on the ground ensure improvement in the quality of life for elderlies.

This journey has been incessant, with newer challenges and milestones, with every passing day!

New missions are being conceptualized, for bringing in sustainable change in the lives of elderlies. Through collaborations, partnerships and working with the governments to strengthen the systems a lot more is being achieved.

In every geography where Vriddha Mitra operates, a network of organizations is created, with an intention to institutionalize it within the government administrative systems for its larger reach and support to all elderlies residing in the respective city and district.

Dr. Benazir Patil, CEO, SCHOOL

Vriddha Mitra in the field



Last Mile Connectivity

Pama and Dilip Gaikwad, Taljai Vasahat, Sahakar Nagar, Pune

Pama Gaikwad Granny lives with her elderly husband Dilip Gaikwad since many years in Taljai Vasahat, Pune. They have no children. Grandpa always work as a tempo driver and Granny as a construction worker. Life went on, until one day, when they realized they had become old and could no longer work for a living. With no saving, gradually the quality of life deteriorated. Unable to fulfil their very basic necessities, residing in dilapidated shelter, weakness and illness got added naturally. Grandpa not only suffered from hyper-tension but slowly began to lose mobility due to stiffness in his joints, making him almost bedridden. Pama Granny became asthmatic due to her long years of working at the construction sites. Both were living in a very difficult state, and had lost complete hope.

During the first wave of Covid in 2020, our Community Officers registered them in the program. The very first efforts were made to restore their health through ensuring them regular ration, along with doctor's consultation, medication and supplements. Granny was also provided with an asthma pump to ease her breathing. Grandpa was encouraged for physiotherapy which helped in easing the stiffness in his knees, and improved his mobility.

The team continued to visit them every now and then to ensure the required care, attention and support, however, the challenge regarding their dilapidated house continued to disturb each one of us. With much effort, the team identified a donor to build their house. Multiple visits were made to assess the situation regarding costs and other essentials that were required to ensure they had a decent dwelling.

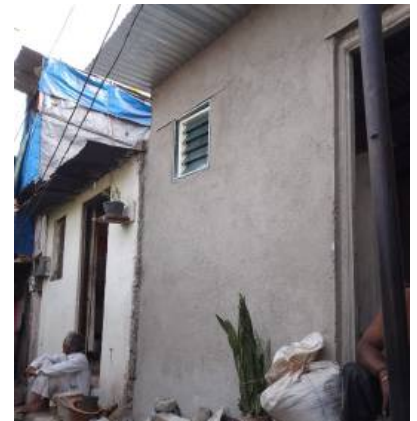
In the month of April 2022 arrangements were made for the elderly couple to stay in a nearby neighbour's house for the duration of house construction. The old structure was razed to the ground, and a one room house with a small kitchenette, a toilet and storage was constructed. As the site is on a hilly location, and far inside the area, the building materials had to be carried for a very long distance. Many challenges were faced, and the construction took much longer time than anticipated. Some of these included lack of electricity connection, which was sorted out with the help of a kind neighbour.

Today, Granny and Grandpa live in this dwelling with much wonder, pride and happiness. Their eyes reflect a deep sense of satisfaction.

Before



After



Improving hearing through audiometry tests and hearing aid in Bhitwar block of Gwalior District

In the rural block of Bhitwar in Gwalior district about 80% of the elderly registered in Vriddha Mitra program live below the poverty line. Availability of and access to appropriate and timely treatment for some of their health complications continues to be a challenge even today. This causes delay in both identification and treatment when it comes to problems with vision, hearing and mobility. At times, seeking treatment for these issues is beyond their reach due to various reasons like financial constraints, irregular transport, lack of information and guidance.

When we organized a health-check up with specific focus on hearing problems, a large number of elderly were detected with partial hearing loss which was further worsening, and they had no understanding of what needs to be done.

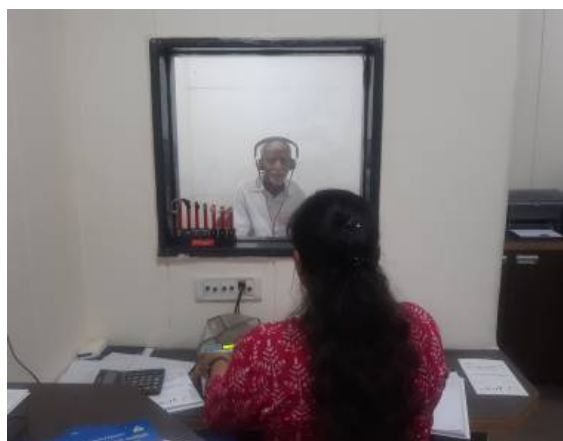
The team made an effort to find out clinics in Gwalior city, wherein free of cost treatment would be imparted to these elderly. This was not as easy as it was thought of. After much effort, Agrawal Hospital and Research Institute of Audiology, located in Gwalior city, kindly agreed to conduct free consultation along with audiometry test of the elderly suffering from hearing loss, so as to ascertain their level of deafness and illness, if any.

The next immediate challenge was transportation, as these elderly had to be taken to the city from the villages. The team also worked on this and a decision to take the elderly for the tests on 5th, 15th and 25th of every month was taken.

From then on, elderly listed from each village are consulted and on each of the decided date, 10 elderly are taken to Gwalior city for free Audiometry test, overall consultation and treatment. A few elderly have also been prescribed medication and this is being provided by the institute. 'Hearing Aids' have been made available with the support of one individual donor from Gwalior city.

Vriddha Mitra is also trying to procure hearing aid from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

It is indeed wonderful to meet the elderly once their hearing is restored. The happiness and confidence in them invoke a sense of achievement, clearly visible on their faces.



Important Updates of the Quarter

Pune

- Total 29,784 home visits including follow-up visits were conducted during the last quarter to provide support to elderlies through: counselling on improving life style; mental well-being; psychological support; nutrition; medication; social security entitlements and schemes; and all referral services. Interactions were held with the family members to discuss about elderlies' health issues and the care required.
- 637 different assistive devices such as walking sticks, walkers, diapers, commode chairs, asthma pumps, spectacles, cervical belts, abdominal belts, knee caps, and many others were provided to improve the quality of life for the elderlies.
- Total 5,286 elderlies were provided with medicines and nutritional supplements
- Total 1,317 elderlies were provided with Raw Ration and few elderlies with cooked food
- During this quarter 580 elderlies got physiotherapy in the community and 440 elderlies got physiotherapy at the Geriatric Units.
- 1,087 elderlies were provided consultation and medication through the virtual OPDs held near their homes.

Mumbai, Bhopal and Gwalior

- Total 9989 home visits and follow-up visits (Mumbai-2005, Gwalior-4522, Bhopal-3462) were conducted during the last quarter to provide support to elderlies.
- Total 160 assistive devices (Mumbai-79, Gwalior-38, Bhopal-43) were provided to the elderlies
- Total 550 elderlies (Mumbai-144, Gwalior-338, Bhopal-268) were provided consultation through Virtual OPDs
- Medicines, multi-vitamins and different supplements were extended to 3129 elderlies (Mumbai-657, Gwalior- 1327, Bhopal-1145)
- Raw ration was distributed to 152 elderlies (Mumbai-119, Bhopal-33)
- Total 140 elderlies (Gwalior-50, Bhopal-46, Mumbai-44) were provided with tele-consultation at home.
- Total 931 elderlies (Gwalior-422, Bhopal-358, Mumbai-151) were provided home health check-ups.
- 30 elderlies received physiotherapy in the community in Bhopal.
- 73 elderlies (Gwalior-49, Bhopal-24) were assisted in getting their Ayushman (health insurance) Card

Key Highlights

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with The Bhopal School of Social Sciences, Bhopal:

On 26th June 2022, an MoU was signed between The Bhopal School of Social Sciences, Bhopal and SCHOOL. This MOU ensures placement of students as interns to contribute and participate in the work being done in the field. The MOU will also ensure collaborative activities for all domains of quality of life for the elderlies, with specific focus on Mental Health.

Inauguration of New Geriatric Unit at Sonawane Hospital of Pune Municipal Corporation

After witnessing the success of first Geriatric Unit at Dalvi Hospital of Pune Municipal Corporation, SBI-Capital supported us in establishing second Geriatric Unit at Sonawane Hospital of PMC. This Unit was inaugurated on 10th May 2022. It was inaugurated at the hands of Medical-Officer-Health of PMC, with blessings of Mr. Vikram Kumar, Hon'ble Municipal Commissioner, PMC. Other guests of honour were Mr. Roshan Negi from SBI capital, Mrs. Manisha Ladkat and Mr. Avinash Bagve. Elderlies from all clusters also attended the event and shared their experiences about physiotherapy treatment that they have been receiving for last one year.



COVID vaccination project in Pune, Gwalior, Bhopal and Giridih

A continuous effort for Covid-19 vaccination helped us in vaccinating 16638 more elderly starting from 1st of April to 30th June 2022.

Rural intervention in Pune District

A new beginning has been made in Kambre village of Bhor block of Pune district. Vriddha Mitra has started with capturing the details of the elderly in Saving Life Checklist so as to develop personalized individual care plans. The regular activities include health-check-ups and dispensing of medicines and supplements; eye check-ups for screening the elderly for Cataract surgeries and subsequently getting the surgeries done; and physiotherapy sessions.

New Ventures, Collaborations, Partnerships

- Bharti Vidyapeeth's Dental Institute has agreed to provide the support for human resources for the dental section at the Geriatric Unit in Sonawane Hospital, Pune
- Sancheti Institute of Physiotherapy has started providing human resources support to both the Geriatric Units in Pune city.
- Brijlal Jindal Physiotherapy College will also be starting with physiotherapy sessions in the community in Pune city.
- Medicare Charitable Trust has started conducting orthopedic screening camps in the field and has also started providing treatment and medication to the identified elderly.
- Art of Helping Organization has started providing cooked food to the needy elderly.
- Mudita Foundation has come forward and distributed 200 ration kits every month during the entire quarter
- The data collection for the Quality-of-Life Research Study in Pune has begun
- A special recreational program called 'Abhaya' which focuses on women empowerment has been initiated in one cluster of Pune city, in collaboration with Vanchit Vikas.
- Agarwal Hospital and Research Institute Gwalior, has started with regular audiometry tests and support for consultation and treatment for hearing ailments in the elderly.
- The Block Medical Officer at the Community Health Center Bhitwar has issued letters and this has helped in taking necessary medicines from the nearby CHC for the elderly in the entire block.



We recognize and acknowledge continuous support of various organizations in Pune, Mumbai, Bhopal, Gwalior and Delhi who are part of our 'Vriddha Mitra' network, extending free services and care to our elderly.