



VRIDDHA MITRA

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These three months seemed busier than ever. Reducing the vaccine hesitancy of the elderlies was becoming tougher and tougher, but as they say, if you can carve a clear path, you can even weather the storm! A thought through strategy to visit every elderly at their home, speaking to them as friends, making them understand the importance of vaccination and if need be, organizing the same through a mobile vaccine team at their homes, worked very well.



Vriddha Mitras, continue to work as social mobilizers; Vaccination teams of local governments vaccinate the elderlies; 'Vaccine on Wheels' Teams ensure that the bedridden, fragile and immobile elderlies are vaccinated at home with complete ease and without any anxiety and fears. This mantra has brought us to a reality that more and more elderlies can get vaccinated and their fears can be ended.

Other important activities that took speed included: a memorandum of understanding with Bhopal Municipal Corporation; setting up of 'Geriatric Units' in Pune and Bhopal; building the momentum on social security entitlements and schemes across all locations; and initiating a housing project in Pune with a focus on repairing or revamping the dilapidated houses to build a completely fresh one. The experiences while repairing and building houses of the elderlies made a deep impact on the minds of all those who were involved and serious effort to reach out to more donors with a request for support is being made. It reinforced our belief, 'good housing conditions is a prerequisite for inclusive, equitable, safe, resilient, sustainable and quality life for our elderlies'.



Benazir

Dr. Benazir Patil, CEO, SCHOOL

Vriddha Mitra in the field



Last Mile Connectivity

Hanifa Kasam Shaikh, aged 65 years, lives in Ambojwadi, Malad, Mumbai

Hanifa Granny has been living in Ambojwadi for the last 30 years and presently lives all alone. Her husband died many years ago. She had three sons and a daughter, two of her sons passed away years ago. Her last son, daughter in law and three grandchildren stay separately. Granny makes her two ends meet by begging and also supports her daughter as she lost her job due to nation-wide lock down.

After registering Granny in the project, she was immediately extended support with ration. Soon, her eye problem was identified by the Community Officer and an appointment in one of the charitable trust hospitals was sought. The doctor informed that one of her eyes got damaged but other eye can be saved through surgery and suggested few tests before surgery. The CO made lots of effort and the surgery was successful.

Granny now regularly comes for virtual OPD. She has also been provided with multivitamin and calcium tablets as per doctor's prescription. A renewed eyesight, regular ration and supplements has made a difference and Granny is at ease now.



Sindhu Baban Salunke, aged 61 years, lives in Tadiwala Road, Pune

Sindhu Granny, 61-year-old lives with her son, who is around 30 years old in Tadiwala Road slums of Pune City. While she has two sons, her elder son has not been in contact with her for years together and has not even shared his address with her. Her younger son, for last few years has been alcohol addict, adding misery to his and his mother's life. Granny had been ill for a long time suffering from high blood pressure, general weakness and had swelling on her face but no medicines to help her. Due to slip disc, she had challenges in walking and doing her daily tasks. Diminished physical activity made her lethargic, mentally depressed and she would seem disoriented sometimes.

Our Community Officer (CO) Jyoti met her during the Covid lockdown in June 2020. Soon she started making home-visits to her house to understand more about her situation. Jyoti registered her in 'Vridha Mitra' by filling her 'Saving Life Checklist' which provided Jyoti with all the details of her physical and mental wellbeing, her level of independence and the challenges she was facing on day-to-day basis. Jyoti also saw that her house was totally dilapidated and even the most basic things like the utensils, household items were missing in the house. Her house was nothing but a window-less shack made of tin and plastic, the darkness in the room was combined with filthy smell. Cockroaches and rodents ran about and dirty water from nearby drainage was coming in the house from one side.

Jyoti was appalled to see one frail looking old woman sleeping in such a situation.

Before



After



Having no clean place to stand, let alone sit, Jyoti reached out to the team and expressed the need to do something about Sindhu Granny's house. Jyoti shared that Granny has been a widow since many years and lived there with her only son who was an alcoholic, unemployed and involved in unsocial activities like stealing, pilfering etc. Since there was no one to earn an income there was no money for food, medicines or for any essentials. The electricity supply had long been cut off due nonpayment of bills since a couple of years. Due to extreme malnutrition and weakness Granny was unable to stand and with great difficulty could only move or walk by placing both her palms on the ground and walk on all four limbs together. She suffered from stiffness in her joints and had low immunity levels along with blood pressure but had no medicine to help her. Being old and sick, Granny could not clean her home, cook or do much work. Her son was missing most of the time found to be lying around in a drunken state and would come home sometimes only to eat food which Granny would get for herself and her son from the organization Deep Griha.

Granny was provided with doctor's consultation in virtual OPD, and was immediately put on a much-needed course of multivitamin and calcium supplements to build her immunity level and lessen her weakness. During the weeks that followed, with the help of neighbour's and volunteers it became possible to clean up Granny, her son and her house from the dirt and grime. She and her son were provided with clean clothes and counselling was done for them with regard to cleanliness and hygiene. Her son was encouraged to give up alcohol and go for alcohol de-addiction for which he agreed.

Taking into consideration all the current and future challenges faced by Granny, a collective decision was taken to help make her living condition better in whatever way possible. Vriddha Mitra Team reached out to several donors for support and finally raised funds to construct a fresh new room for her on the same space after razing down the old structure. A proper concrete cement house having door, windows, Indian style toilet and bathroom along with a small functional kitchen platform were constructed for Sindhu Granny in February 2022. Floor tiling, light fittings, painting, indoor plumbing along with drainage line etc. were also done. Electricity meter which had been disconnected since years was reconnected back after payment of pending dues.

During the days the house was being constructed, an effort was made by the team to identify a place in one of the old age homes for Granny to stay. However, when the community saw the immense efforts of the team, one of the neighbour's came forward and took Granny's responsibility till the house was finished. This kind gesture by her neighbour's was highly appreciated by one and all.

While the house was being done, a lot of things changed. With continuous support from the team, Granny regained her lost health and developed enough strength to stand on her two feet and walk around with little support. Having her own small private toilet and bathroom made a huge difference. Seeing the positive changes in his mother's health and also seeing the house being built, the son's life with the counselling at the de-addiction center took a different turn. He started working with a local vendor and now earns a small amount for the two of them.

The team organized a small house-warming ceremony, which came in as a surprise for Granny and her son. At the ceremony, Sindhu Granny's happiness new no end. She stood spellbound, looking at her house adorned with flowers, which she could have never ever dreamt of. Her tears of gratitude and thankfulness kept rolling. Eternally beholden she kept on blessing the Vriddha Mitra team, the donor and especially Jyoti who had come in her life as an angel in disguise, without her efforts and dedication nothing would have been possible.

The twinkle in Granny's teary eyes were shinier than the glow from the new light fittings!



Important Updates of the Quarter

Pune

- Total 21,709 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, interactions with family members to discuss about elderlies' health issues and care required, delivered the information on health issues, nutrition, exercise, medication, government schemes and information on physiotherapy sessions being held in the field and in the Geriatric Unit.
- 1,952 different assistive devices such as walking sticks, walkers, diapers, commode chair, asthma pumps, spectacles, cervical belt, abdominal belt, knee caps, etc. were provided to make the elderlies' life easy.
- Total 6,574 elderlies were provided with medicines and nutritional supplements
- Total 692 elderlies were provided with Ration
- During this quarter 1,026 elderlies got physiotherapy in the community and 419 elderlies got physiotherapy at the Geriatric unit.
- 1,513 elderlies were provided consultation and medication through the virtual OPDs held near their homes.

Mumbai, Bhopal and Gwalior

- Total 5853 home visits and follow-up visits (Mumbai-2662, Gwalior-1762, Bhopal-1429) were conducted during the last quarter to provide support to elderlies.
- total 173 assistive devices (Mumbai-76, Gwalior-19, Bhopal-68) were provided to the elderlies
- total 434 elderlies (Mumbai-136, Gwalior-128, Bhopal-170) were provided consultation through Virtual OPDs
- Medicines and multi-vitamins were extended to 975 elderlies (Mumbai-458, Gwalior- 269, Bhopal-248)
- Raw ration kits were distributed to 185 elderlies (Mumbai-125, Bhopal-60)
- 124 elderlies were provided with blanket, pillows, bedsheets and clothes (Mumbai-47, Gwalior-77)
- Total 142 elderlies (Gwalior-132, Bhopal-10) were provided with tele-consultation at home
- Total 391 elderlies (Gwalior-226, Bhopal-165) were provided home health check up
- 93 elderlies received physiotherapy in the community and 28 elderlies got physiotherapy at Geriatric unit in Bhopal
- 35 elderlies started with pension (Gwalior-26, Bhopal-9) under government schemes and 44 elderlies (Gwalior-22, Bhopal-22) received support to get Ayushman (health insurance) card

Key Highlights

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with Bhopal Municipal Corporation:

On 19th March 2022, an MoU was signed between Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) and SCHOOL. This MOU ensures provision of infrastructure, space and support by the BMC to SCHOOL for setting up Geriatric Units in Bhopal City. Accordingly, the very first unit is being set up in a space provided at Nehru Nagar, Bhopal. At present, this unit will provide with consultation and physiotherapy services to the elderlies from slum communities and other residential areas of Bhopal. The physiotherapy facility is being provided 5 days in a week (Monday to Friday) between 10.00 AM to 5.00 PM.

Sanctioning of new Geriatric Unit at Sonawane Hospital in Pune City

Based on the success of the first Geriatric Unit at Dalvi Hospital, SCHOOL under guidance of PMC reached out to SBI Capital for support for another unit to be established in Sonawane Hospital located in Bhawani Peth area of Pune city. This request of SCHOOL was considered and support to set up the second unit at Sonawane Hospital was extended by SBI Capital Markets Ltd in February 2022.

Starting from 27th July 2021 to 31st March 2022, total patients that have been escorted to Dalvi hospital for physiotherapy are 608 with an average of 68 patients per month. Since every patient receives multiple number of sittings/ physiotherapy sessions, a total number of 2247 physiotherapy sessions were held during this period, with an average of 250 sessions per month and 14 sessions per day. Further to this, it is important to note that there are approximately 4 new patients along with 8 to 10 follow up patients every day.

COVID vaccination project in Pune

A special project to ensure vaccination of elderlies starting from Sept 21 to March 22, was implemented in the slum communities of 14 wards of Pune city. Total number of elderlies that were reached at their homes were 45312, and 55,458 vaccine doses (1st, 2nd or pre-caution) were administered to the elderlies, which included bedridden, immobile and hesitant elderlies as well.

Initiation of housing project for elderlies in Pune

On a day-to-day basis we meet with the elderlies who are facing the challenges of living in dilapidated homes that have conditions like: broken ceilings; broken floors; no toilets in the house; presence of termites and rodents; and severely unhygienic conditions. As Vriddha Mitra sees 'good housing conditions' as a prerequisite for inclusive, equitable, safe, resilient, sustainable and quality life for our elderlies, an effort was made to reach out to donors for supporting this activity. During the last quarter, 5 houses that belonged to the elderlies living along were repaired and reconstructed, this included reconstructing 3 houses completely, in one house a toilet was constructed and for one house the roof was replaced. The team has identified many more houses that need reconstruction and is making attempts to raise funds for this activity.

New Ventures, Collaborations, Partnerships

- Vriddha Mitra program has expanded to three new clusters i.e., in Janta Vasahat (Sinhagad Road ward), Laxmi Nagar and Yashwant Nagar (Yerawada ward) and Patil Estate (Ghole Road ward) in Pune
- An initiative to create a network of organizations has been embarked. First meeting of 'Vriddha Mitra Network' was organized on 6th January 2022 in Pune with 21 organizations
- Three Volunteers' Workshop were held during the months of Jan, Feb and March, and a total of 71 volunteers were trained and oriented on aspects and challenges related to elderlies
- Cooking competition of elderly women from all the clusters in Pune was organized on the occasion of 'International Women's Day'. Total 350 elderlies attended the event and out of those, 170 women participated in the competition
- In Ambojwadi slums in Mumbai, the Law students oriented the elderlies on the rights of elderlies on this very day
- With the support from Rotary Club, Pune, the first picnic after Covid situation was organized for 30 elderlies at Empress Garden, Pune, which proved to be a good recreation for elderlies
- A screening camp for intestinal cancer was organized with the support from PRAYAS organization in Janwadi cluster, Pune. 156 elderlies attended the camp, out of which 2 elderlies were detected and referred for treatment
- In Mumbai Senior Citizen Card Scheme has been introduced and support is being provided by an organization called YUVA. 37 elderlies received senior citizen card with their support

We recognize and acknowledge continuous support of Sevadham Trust, Deep Griha Society, Vanchit Vikas, Navnirman Samaj Vikas Kendra and Department of Physiotherapy, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth



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