

Vridhdha Mitra

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Vridhdha Mitra is an innovative and comprehensive program that addresses the unique needs of elderly people in the community. Its focus on community-based, non-institutional care, and intergenerational connections make it a model program for addressing the challenges faced by elderly people in India and beyond.

वृद्ध मित्र

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



As of 2021, the current proportion of youths (aged 0-14 years) versus older people (aged 60 years and above) in India is approximately 27.9% and 12.6%, respectively, according to the United Nations World Population Prospects 2021. However, by 2030, it is projected that the proportion of older people in India will increase to approximately 15.8%, while the proportion of youths is expected to decline to approximately 25.9%.

This demographic shift towards an aging population is due to several factors, including increased life expectancy, declining fertility rates, and improvements in healthcare. As a result, India is expected to have the second-largest population of older people in the world by 2050, after China.

The increasing proportion of elderly people in India is expected to have significant implications for healthcare, social security, and economic development. It is important for policymakers and society as a whole to prepare for these demographic changes and develop strategies to address the unique challenges and opportunities presented by an aging population.

In this scenario, Vriddha Mitra brings in innovative approaches to address multidimensional needs of elderly people, especially by extending support and services in their own homes and by ensuring that they age in place and maintain their independence, leading to a positive impact on their overall well-being. Vriddha Mitra also emphasizes intergenerational dialogue wherein young people volunteer and engage with elderly people, not only to foster mutual understanding and respect, but also to strengthen care and support for the elderly people. Through its intergenerational activities, the program helps to promote social cohesion and inclusiveness, and provides a platform for young people to learn from the experiences and wisdom of elderly people. This will go a long way in addressing ageist attitudes and stereotypes, and create a more supportive and inclusive society for people of all ages.

Vriddha Mitra also collaborates with local governments in a variety of ways to help address the needs of elderly people in the community. By working together, the program and local government authorities ensure that elderly people have access to the resources and support they need to maintain their independence and quality of life.

Gradual evolution and achievement of significant milestones like addressing national level experts, developing decadal framework for the decade of Healthy Ageing 2020-20 in partnership with Ministry of Health and WHO; formulating MOUs with municipal corporations and governing bodies; establishing geriatric units as dedicated spaces for delivering health care services to elderly people; and reaching a scale of 33,000 elderlies across 4 geographies in India are some which are worth a mention.

Dr. Benazir Patil, CEO, School



LAST MILE CONNECTIVITY

VIBHA MORE, AGED 66, LIVES IN KOLAR ROAD, BHOPAL

Vibha More Granny resides in Gehunkheda, Kolar Road with her husband Sahib Rao More. They have four married children living nearby. Sahib Rao receives a government pension of ₹600, which helps with their household expenses. Granny possesses a ration card and an Ayushman card.



Both Granny and her husband were registered with Vriddha Mitra. During an initial visit, Community Officers identified Granny's health issues including high blood pressure, blood sugar, and vision problems. She received medication and was advised to go on daily walks with her husband. However, despite monitoring and follow-up, her blood sugar remained high, leading to a change in medication at a private hospital. Granny's vision problem was addressed at an eye check-up camp, where she was diagnosed with cataracts.

Initially, the cost of consultation at Seva Sadhan Hospital was unaffordable, but after assistance from the Community Officer, Granny received free consultation and was informed that her cataract surgery would also be free of charge. On January 20th, her successful surgery took place, and she was discharged the next day. Granny expressed her gratitude to Vriddha Mitra Team for their support, as she now lives comfortably with improved vision.

KAUSHALYA NARAYAN YEMUL, AGED 67, LIVES IN LOHIYA NAGAR, PUNE



Kaushalya Narayan Yemul lives with her elderly husband, son, and his family. Both elders suffer from high blood pressure, diabetes, and other age-related ailments. Grandma, who has been receiving treatment and medication for depression since 1984, had become socially withdrawn, limiting her interactions with family members and others.

Vriddha Mitra's Community Officer (CO) registered Grandma Kaushalya and her husband in the Vriddha Mitra program for seniors. After a preliminary health check-up, they were prescribed multivitamin and calcium supplements.

In July 2022, Grandma's health deteriorated significantly, experiencing persistent coughing despite medication. Recognizing her symptoms, CO recommended a Tuberculosis (TB) test, which turned out positive. As per government regulations, Grandma underwent a 6-month course of treatment, enduring side effects such as vomiting, diarrhea, and pain. The burden of numerous medications took a toll on her already fragile mental health, leading to irritability, nervousness, and emotional instability. The CO advised the family to seek mental health counseling for Grandma. From August 2022, with CO's assistance, Grandma began attending online one-to-one mental empowerment sessions every Friday. These sessions provided a platform for her to express her fears and insecurities, gradually fostering a sense of inner peace. The therapist guided Grandma on overcoming her fears, redirecting her focus towards positivity, and regaining control of her life.

Over time, Grandma exhibited positive changes, with reduced nervousness and improved communication. Her newfound inner peace radiated from within and shone on her face. Through consistent counseling and timely medication, Grandma's subsequent TB test came back negative, marking a remarkable achievement. She had transformed from a distressed and depressed individual into a calm and composed person. The CO played a crucial role in this transformative journey, displaying patience, unwavering support, and faith in Grandma. During the mental empowerment sessions, CO became a guiding presence, leading Grandma towards a brighter future that she could now envision.

IMPORTANT UPDATES OF THE QUARTER



Last Mile Connectivity in Pune

- Total 26886 home visits, including follow up visits, were made during the last quarter. Community officers 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.
- 634 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 5717 elderlies were provided with medicines and nutritional supplements.
- Total 1468 elderlies were provided consultation and medication through the virtual OPDs held near their homes.
- Total 289 elderlies received dental treatment in the Dental OPD in Sonawane Hospital.
- Total 3110 elderlies escorted for physiotherapy and other services like private hospital, government hospital and other organisation.
- Total 3842 elderlies referred for different services like bone screening, proctologist, eye check-up, mental health counselling, cancer care treatment, BP, sugar and Asthma treatment, etc.
- Total 1326 elderlies received raw ration and cooked food.
- Total 2135 elderlies received physiotherapy treatment in the community and geriatric unit. (Community -1177, Geriatric Unit - 958)
- Total 84 elderlies required linkages to disability shelter and employment out of those 68 elderlies linked to further department and 51 elderlies received benefit of the disability and employment.
- Total 291 entitlements documents were issued. Out of these, 12 elderlies received income certificate and 3 elderlies started monthly pension. 33 elderlies received Aadhar card, 30 elderlies received Ration card, 70 elderlies received E-Shram Card, 83 received Ayushman Bharat card, and 12 elderlies received income certificates. 48 domicile and 4 pan cards were issued as well.
- Total 244 proposals were submitted for SGY and Ayushman card. Out of those, 219 elderlies received Ayushman card and 25 elderlies received SGY card. 127 elderlies availed free medicines and 16 elderlies get benefitted from a concession of Rs. 10.14 lakhs in hospitalization fees.
- We have started Vriddha Mitra program in rural area in Kambre and a village in Velhe block. Total 308 elderlies register in the program. Also started various activities i.e., physiotherapy sessions, eye check-up camp and proctologist camp and cancer screening.

- Total 11779 home visits including follow-up visits (Gwalior-4808, Bhopal-5077 and Mumbai-1894) were conducted during the last quarter to provide support to elderlies.
- Total 144 elderlies were provided with assistive devices (Gwalior-39, Bhopal-105 and Mumbai-0).
- Total 1102 elderlies (Gwalior-773, Bhopal-229) were provided consultation through Virtual OPDs.
- Medicines, multi-vitamins and various supplements were extended to 4016 elderlies (Gwalior-2447, Bhopal-990 and Mumbai- 579).
- Raw ration was distributed to 11 elderlies in Bhopal 7 and Mumbai 4.
- Total 1136 elderlies were provided home health check-ups. (Gwalior-598, Bhopal-538).
- 385 elderlies received physiotherapy in Bhopal, out of which 269 elderlies received in the community and 216 elderlies received at the geriatric unit.
- 28 elderlies were assisted in getting their Ayushman Cards. (Gwalior-7, Bhopal-15)
- 154 elderlies received eye check-ups (Gwalior-29, Bhopal-53 and Mumbai- 72), out of which 28 elderlies were done the cataract surgery. Gwalior-6, Bhopal-14 and Mumbai- 8)
- Total 31 elderlies' proposal submitted for various pension schemes (Gwalior-8, Bhopal-23), out of which 11 elderlies received pension (Gwalior-7, Bhopal-4).
- 422 elderlies were referred for different services to government, private and other organisations (Gwalior - 39, Bhopal-93 and Mumbai-290).



KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- 1. Starting of two geriatric units in Gwalior and Bhopal :** With the support of SBI Caps, two new geriatric units for the elderly in Bhopal and Gwalior have been approved and have begun construction. They will be equipped with various physiotherapy modalities and exercise machines for treatment of the elderly at no cost to them.
- 2. International Women's Day Celebration:** The occasion of 'International Women's Day' was celebrated with great vigor and enthusiasm on 8th March 2023 in 10 clusters across Pune city. 515 elderlies participated in a costume competition and dressed up as various celebrities and public figures. The winners in each cluster were extended first, second, and third place prizes for their efforts and passion.
- 3. Interview on AIR:** On the 9th of February 2023, All India Radio Pune aired an interview with our CEO, Dr. Benazir Patil. Mrs. Gauri Lagoo, the interviewer, spoke with Dr. Patil regarding the Vriddha Mitra program and the pressing need for elderly care in cities. Further, Dr. Patil elaborated on the workings of the program, its reach, and the various ways in which Vriddha Mitra operates.
- 4. Health Camp and Felicitation at Kambre Village:** On the 18th of February, a Health Camp was held in collaboration with Surya Sahyadri Hospital at Kambre Village. Following the camp, a felicitation of representatives of Vriddha Mitra took place during a local celebration which saw the attendance of a majority of the members of the village. The Vriddha Mitra team was recognized by the village council for our efforts in reaching the elderly members of Kambre.



5. **Dental Unit at Sonawane Hospital in Pune city:** In the month of January 2023, the first Dental Unit commenced operations in Sonawane Hospital in Pune city. Interns from Rangoonwala College and Bharti Vidyapeeth hospital attend to the elderlies escorted to the unit. Total of 124 elderlies have received treatment at the unit thus far.



6. **Launch of expansion in Pune city** – City Saturation Program starting from 1st Jan: An effort to saturate the city of Pune in the next five years is being made by Vriddha Mitra program, wherein every elderly person residing in the slum will be reached and provided with necessary support and care. This expansion in 2023 will mean covering 122 slums and 28,500 elderlies in Pune city, with subsequent expansion every year till the city saturation takes place.

8. **New support through essential services for Mumbai project:** The Mumbai Project received support in the form of essential services such as diapers and medicines from Glenmark Life Sciences.



7. **House construction for grannies at Tadiwala Road & Yerwada:** In two clusters of Pune, Tadiwala Road and Yerwada, two house constructions were undertaken. These houses were for two grannies belonging to the high-intense category of care.

9. **VM+ Activities:** The Vriddha Mitra+ Project aims to serve the elderly members of residential societies at rates that are affordable to them. Since January 2023, the project has been gaining traction among societies in Pune city.



10. **Bhopal EXPO:** From 13th March to 15th March 2023, the Vriddha Mitra team took part in the AAIM-EX23 Industrial Expo in Bhopal. During this time, the team was able to disseminate vital information regarding the project as well as appeal to many industrialists regarding the needs of the elderly.

NEW VENTURES, COLLABORATIONS, AND PARTNERSHIPS

- An MOU was reached with Rangoonwala Dental Clinic and Bharati Vidyapeeth Dental College for the operation of the new Dental Unit at Sonawane Hospital in Pune. Interns from both institutes provide dental treatment to the elderlies at no cost to them.
- An MOU was also reached with Surya Sahyadri Hospital in Pune for support with health camps for the elderly.
- An MOU was reached with Excellencia Consultation to facilitate asthma screening camps.
- An MOU with Gauravi Organization, a women's rights-oriented crisis center in Bhopal, is under process.
- An MOU with The Bhopal School of Social Sciences is under process for mental health counselling.
- 4 Health Camps and Dental Camps are to be conducted in the community in Bhopal in collaboration with the MP Health Department.

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



SCHOOL

Society Of
Community Health Oriented
Operational Links

You can also contribute:
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