



ARPANA SERVICES

Becoming Capable, Competent, and Independent – Leaving Behind the Shadows of Exclusion and Dependency!



**“As members of our Federation of Differently-abled Persons Organisations,
we have gained recognition and respect in our communities”**

Differently Abled Persons Report April 2020 to March 2021

ARPANA RESEARCH & CHARITIES TRUST

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Our Founder and Inspiration-Param Pujya Ma



Motivated and guided by Param Pujya Ma, Arpana members started 48 Differently-abled Persons Organizations (DPOs) for those not leading normal lives due to disabilities.

Ma's perception of the Lord in every person led to the motif of service with respect, dignity and love to each beneficiary.

Her spontaneous words, flowing with wisdom and bhakti, and her extraordinary life of service to all who came to her, continues to inspire and motivate Arpana members.

Sharing their Journey – from the Margins to the Mainstream....

Anjali – Abandoned, Stunted, Neglected – Now Energized & Vitalized

Anjali is now 10 years old, active, bright eyed and cheerful! Her family belongs to a little hamlet, Mustfabad, near the U.P. border.

5 years ago, this same little girl was suffering, at the age of 5 years, from malnutrition and stunted growth. She looked just 2 years old, was curled tight in a ball. She was unable to walk, unable to talk.

Her mother had abandoned her child and family on account of its extreme poverty. Anjali's father worked as agricultural labour and her only care provider was her aged grandmother.

The Arpana team enrolled the family in the Mustafabad DPO. Arpana arranged for rations and regular milk for Anjali for 3 years. Arpana arranged for monthly visits by a physiotherapist. Anjali's grandmother learnt the exercises and made Anjali exercise daily. She learnt how to massage her and gave her a regular massage as advised by the visiting physiotherapist.

Gradually Anjali has grown in height: she runs around, talks and chats like any young girl. She has been enrolled in school and is now in the 2nd standard!



'I now deposit savings in my DPO

Joining our DPO has Built my Confidence!

Rohit is 18 years old and a member of Nai Vishwas DPO in Modipur. He has now completed his 12th grade.

"On becoming a member 3 years ago, the first vital change came when I got my medical certificate and then my pension. This enabled me to get benefits to which we PwDs are entitled.

"A new confidence and hope has grown in my heart. I want to make a good life, **I do not feel handicapped – I feel confident and full of hope!"**

United We Stand - Growing in Strength, Solidarity & Stature!

Arpana has worked with persons with disabilities (PwDs) since 2012. Arpana conducted many surveys to identify PwDs as they were hidden by families, owing to the social stigma of being disabled. Through constant dialogue, meetings and motivation, Arpana organized PwDs into village-based collectives.

It has been a long and difficult journey as PwDs were burdened not only by poverty and marginalization and social stigma, but also by negative attitudes such as passive acceptance, hopelessness and low self-worth.



However, Arpana's constant efforts, counselling, practical support and ensuring financial security has transformed their outlook.

There are 48 Differently-abled Person's Organizations (DPOs) across 4 blocks of Karnal District with 1,242 active members.

Through their DPOs, members have built up savings and have taken loans to meet their domestic needs, repair homes and start income generation activities.

Meetings of Differently-abled Person's Organizations (DPOs)

The monthly DPO meetings are the vital platform thorough which a spirit of brotherhood is fostered. It is the avenue through which new information is shared regularly and training given on health issues and matters related to government laws and policy, affecting differently-abled persons.

During the months of strict lockdown, DPO meetings were not held. However, the Arpana team maintained live contact with DPO leaders through telephonic conversation and SMS messages. They were sent information related to government directives and preventive measures regarding protection against the Corona Virus.

DPO monthly meeting in village Baragaon

Issues discussed in monthly meetings:

- COVID-19: Awareness, Prevention, Management
- Gram Sabhas (village meetings): petitions
- Assistive Device Camp: Venue, time and benefits
- Celebrations of Festivals and Memorial Days
- Medical Certification
- Transportation passes for bus and rail
- BPL Cards
- Ayushman Insurance cover
- MANREGA: Jobs for all
- World Disability Day: planning & organizing
- List of all PwDs needing assistive devices
- Annual Savings of DPO
- Loan applications
- Voting in local elections
- Substance Abuse and its ill effects



Impact of Covid -19



Outreach Team sharing COVID-19 information with PwDs

During the months of strict lockdown, DPO meetings were not held. However, the Arpana team was in live contact with DPO leaders by phone / SMS messages.

Information related to government directives and preventive measures regarding protection against the Corona Virus were sent to all.

Those DPO members who possess smart phones were advised to download the Arogya Setu App which shows nearby Covid patients. Approx. 95 PwDs did so.

The telephonic communications were kept alive and information was regularly shared on government schemes announced during the lockdown i.e Rations for poor families, increment in pensions, etc. PwDs facing problems were provided assistance and counselling.

For instance, in village Badagaon there were 35 poor and needy PwDs who were not getting rations. DPO leader, Shri Naresh, went with them and presented their difficulties to the Headman, after which the Headman made arrangements for their rations. 8 years ago, there was no one to speak for them, but today they have learned they can step forward, using their collective voice.

Sahayaks: A Vital Support for DPOs

Arpana formed and trained a cadre of volunteers, called the *Viklang Vikas Sahayaks*, dedicated to strengthening the 48 DPOs facilitated by Arpana. Workshops trained them to lead DPO meetings, to make home visits, to help all PwDs obtain certification, Ayushman Insurance, ration cards, etc.



Results of Home Visits by Sahayaks

17 Sahayaks visited 892 PwDs during home visits, resulting in:

- 91 applications for Unique Disability ID Cards.
- 97 PwDs enrolling as new members in DPOs.
- 9 PwDs resuming active participation in DPOs.
- A list of PwDs requiring assistive devices.
- PwDs informed about Assistive Devices Camp.
- PwDs applying for medical certificates/pensions.

Training Sahayaks about DPO Agenda at Arpana

Assistive Devices Camp held in Nilokheri

Arpana has established a useful liaison with Deen Dayal Upadhyay Institute which works for rehabilitation of differently abled persons. It was agreed that Arpana would identify persons with disabilities requiring assistive devices. In October-November 2020, Arpana workers and sahayaks identified persons with hearing and motor disabilities requiring assistive devices.

On 2nd December, a screening camp was held at Arpana's Center in village Budhakhera, where doctors screened 111 PwDs who had come to register for hearing aids, wheelchairs, crutches and tricycles. They screened all PwDs and checked their documents and assured them that suitable assistive devices would be made available in March 2021.



On 24th and 27th March, two functions were held in Nilokheri at the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Institute. All PwDs who had enrolled and had been screened in December 2020, received their assistive devices.

88 PwDs got wheelchairs, hearing machines, smart sticks, crutches and tricycles. All recipients were very happy. The remaining PwDs, unable to attend, were given their assistive devices through Arpana, in their villages.

Celebrations on World Disability Day



The Arpana premises, in village Budhakhera, was buzzing with activity and excitement on 3rd December, 2020.

The Sangarsh Federation held its annual general body meeting and also celebrated World Disability Day by holding a variety of competitions and games for disabled children and adults.

Arpana arranged a special screening camp with Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya to register and screen over 70 PwDs for assistive devices

The Arpana team arranged mehndi, Rangoli and Painting competitions for all disabled persons. 'My story' a writing competition and a paper bag making competition were also organized in which PWD's took part with enthusiasm. Many PWD's also wrote or dictated short stories of their lives and the change they have experienced in the course of their participation in Arpana's endeavour to empower them.

Mr. Satyawan of the District Social Welfare Department was chief guest and addressed the gathering of over 250 disabled persons giving them encouragement and praise for their efforts to make a better life with Arpana's help. He praised Arpana's program to enable and empower persons with disabilities.

Arpana had arranged for a festive lunch for all present. The self-help groups from village Kailash had kindly volunteered to cook and serve the meal for all 250 participants.



The stage is energized by vibrant and joyful performances by differently abled children

Medical Certification

Shri Naresh Kumar, President of Sangarsh Federation of DPOs, has committed to facilitating the process of medical certification for his brethren. He also assists them with applying for pensions, bus passes, etc. The number of persons assisted are given below-

DPO Certification

Total visits to Civil Hospital	41
Total number of Certificate made	337
Total pension made	53
Number of online forms filled for pension	94
Number of Applications for Ration Cards for PwDs	21
Number of Applications for Unique Disability ID Cards for PwDs	91



No Longer Dependent!

Ajay is the son of Shri Surinder and is a resident of village Kalram. He was totally dependent on family members. Since childhood he has been disabled in both his legs. He was helpless to attend school regularly.

Since he has a tricycle, he can now attend school regularly, punctually and independently. After receiving the tricycle, he was very happy and thankful to Arpana for bringing color to my life. "I am happy to be mobile and to go wherever I want!"

Liaison Visits

Meeting with General Manager, Haryana Roadways: Mr. Ish Bhatnagar, HoD, Arpana Rural Development, Shri Naresh Kumar, President of the Sangarsh Federation, and four of its members, met the General Manager, Haryana Roadways, and discussed the bus pass facility provided by the government to the differently-abled.

Mr. Ish Bhatnagar requested the General Manager to help us to take the benefit of this facility and Mr. Manish Sehgal, General Manager, Haryana Roadways assured that he will give all the support to the differently abled members who want to get bus passes made.

Karnal Certificate Facility: The efforts of the Arpana team has enabled all PwD members to access their entitlements and complete their documentation.

The PwD delegation visited the CMO's office to submit an application that PwDs with hearing loss should be checked and given certification in Karnal rather than having to go to Rohtak, a difficult journey for most.

The CMO kindly made this facility available in Karnal and now PwDs get their certificate without difficulty.

DPO leaders meet Dr. Kuldeep, in the CMO office, and get the problems of certification resolved



Orthopaedic Camp

Arpana's doctors met with SHG animators from 20 villages and gave them an update about all Arpana Hospital services. He also informed them of the new and highly skilled orthopedic Surgeon who has joined the hospital.

The animators were urged to counsel patients in need of surgery to avail of a special two day Orthopedic camp.

The Orthopedic camp was held at Arpana Hospital on November 21st & 22nd November 2020.

Dr. Devwart attends to a patient at the camp

Arpana Partners with Government Against Alcohol and Drug Addiction

Mr. Satyawar of the District Social Welfare Department suggested that Arpana becomes a partner with them in the national scale government campaign creating awareness about alcohol abuse, addiction to drugs and the dangers these bring to families.

At Arpana's Budhakhera Centre, Shri Rana gave an intensive orientation to PwDs on the Prime Minister National Campaign to Fight Alcohol and Drug Abuse. He told of 3 government run rehabilitation centres where persons wishing to be free of addiction can be treated free of charge. After the training, several PwDs presented their problems which Shri Rana helped resolve. Some are mentioned below-



- Rekha Devi of village Sangoi is disabled in both legs. She has 2 daughters. Rekha's husband died recently. Rekha submitted forms for her pension 10 months ago, but she has not received it as yet. Shri Rana studied her files and reassured her that her pension was sanctioned and has been deposited in her bank and Rekha should check up with the bank.
- Sarika, also disabled, had not been allotted her pension, even after 5 years. Shri Rana made a note on her file and assured her that she would soon receive it.

Participation of PwDs in Campaigns to Combat Alcohol Abuse

Arpana partnered with the District Social Welfare Board to conduct rallies across 100 target villages to spread awareness about alcohol and drug abuse.

567 PwDs from village based DPOs also participated in 43 rallies conducted by SHG women against alcohol abuse.

DPO members took part in the rallies conducted by SHG women against alcohol abuse



Election Training at the District Social Welfare Department



Shri Satyawan discussed elections with Arpana's DPO delegation

On 14th December 2020, a team of 12 disabled persons, led by Shri Naresh Kumar, President of Sangarsh Federation, visited the District Social Welfare Department and attended a training session on Panchayat Elections held by Election Officers.

The Election Officials explained the importance of elections, the procedures and how to register new voters. All members listened attentively and committed to promote registration of new voters in their villages. A good rapport was established with the officials.

Session on Panchayat Elections at Budhakhera Centre for PwD Leaders

As Panchayat Elections were due in the early months of 2021, a training session for PwD leaders was held at Arpana's Centre in Budhakhera.

Mr. Vikas of the Election Office and Mr. Rana of the District Social Welfare Department, conducted this training session. They emphasized that exercising one's voting right is an important privilege of each citizen and all PwDs need to be aware how important it is to vote in a responsible manner.

The main purpose of the training was to create awareness on the importance of voting and changes in the electoral process and how to cast the electronic vote. A short quiz on elections was conducted to do a recap: members participated enthusiastically.

Shri Rana presented a rousing speech for the encouragement of PwDs



Training in Livelihood Skills: A New Initiative!



On 10th March 2021, Arpana, with the support of the Kalpana Chawla Computech Pvt Ltd. organized an awareness creations camp on livelihood options and skill training. This was held at Arpana's Budhakhera Centre, with 60 PwDs from 6 villages attending.

Mr. Bhatia explained about the different skill training courses offered free of cost in their vocational centres in village Mugal Majra and in Karnal.

Informing PwDs about skill training courses.

33 PwDs enrolled themselves for the Pickles and Preserves courses in Karnal. The Mugal Majra course requires trainees to stay on site and for this course 10 PwDs registered themselves.

On 24th March, 12 PwDs began attending the training in making pickles, jams and preserves in Karnal. The course is for 3 months and trainees who complete the course will get a training stipend of Rs.15,000/- for the 3 months course.



Kalpna Chawla Computech training session being held

Conclusion



Despite the many challenges that were created by the Corona Virus and ensuing lockdown, difficulties were minimised through counselling and advice given over the telephone and regular updates to leaders by WhatsApp.

The regular training of *Sahayaks* (volunteer helpers), their regular home visits, counselling and support are contributing to improving attendance and also improving the quality of meetings.

PwDs race in World Disabilities Day Celebration

As the functioning of DPOs stabilizes after this unsettled phase, the focus will be on livelihood enhancement and skill building amongst DPO leaders. Children's problems will be taken up, regarding schooling and other support required by them.

'We are grateful to all who reach out and are helping us live with dignity!'

Add Your Support to Empower Differently Abled Persons

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