

## NARI SHAKTI - A woman's journey of empowerment!

*Rahibai Soma Popere, 53 years, (left) lives in Kombhalne village in Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, with her husband. She was married at the age of 13 years and settled in the same village. She never received any formal education in her childhood, but had a strong desire to do something for society and for her family.*

*She initiated two Self-Help-Groups (SHGs) for women: 'Chemdevbaba Women's Self Help Group' & 'Mangalnath Baba Women's Self Help Group'. Both SHGs have 12 members each, actively involved in agro-based livelihood activities with the aim to preserve traditional agricultural seeds through Seed Banks.*

*There are 114 varieties of seeds available in Rahibai's home. All these are Gavran seeds (Traditional Seeds). These days, most farmers use chemical based fertilizers which yield lesser quality produce. Rahibai's initiative of establishing Seed Banks not only empowered these women, but also proved useful and was much appreciated by the local community.*

*Rahibai's work in the agricultural sector and in empowering women SHGs using the Seed Bank method, got her recognition by the District administration, which recommended her name for the 'Narishakti Award' which she went on to receive from the Hon'ble President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind on International Women's Day.*



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## COVER STORY: Launch of Report on Homecare for Elderly in India

# 40 HelpAge India

Years of helping elders live with dignity



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HelpAge NEWS

EDITOR **Speaks**

Dear Reader,

We started the year with an inspirational Cyclothon titled 'Project Silver Cyclers', aimed to create awareness on 'Active Ageing' and to draw attention to the critical needs of the elderly. It was led by the dynamic 70 year old Hari Baskaran, who broke all stereotypes on ageing by cycling 4000 kms all the way from Chennai to Delhi, leaving behind an extraordinary journey and fulfilling his life long dream. He inspired many other senior citizens, children and young adults to join him along his route as he cycled through the country.

Another inspirational story came in the form of 53 year old Rahibai, from *Kombhalne* village in Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, who has been a catalyst in empowering the women of her community. She formed them into Self-Help-Groups and started a Seed Bank initiative using traditional seeds. Her work got her recognition not only from the district administration but she was also honored with the 'Narishakti Award' which she went on to receive from the Hon'ble President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind on International Women's Day.

In a first-of-its-kind initiative, HelpAge hosted a National Conclave on Long Term Care for Elderly, in the national capital, recognizing the urgent need for elder care giving at home. A report on the 'Home Care for Elderly in India' was released which covered three locations where HelpAge is currently doing care giving training and making linkages - Leh (J&K), Shimla (HP) and Cuddalore (TN). The report brings to fore the issues of the elderly in the country, especially of the bed bound, immobile and assisted elderly.

As HelpAge India completes its 40 years in service of disadvantaged elderly and moves ahead towards its 41<sup>st</sup> year, we hope to reach and serve many more elders in need.

We would like to thank all our donors, supporters, volunteers and sponsors for their support and generosity, and hope they continue to walk the line with us, to help serve the needy elderly and add value to their lives.

Sonali Sharma  
Director - Communications

## National Conclave on Long Term Care for the Elderly



Release of report on 'Homecare for Elderly in India' at India International Centre, Delhi. (from left): Mr. Imtiaz Ahmed, Mission Head, Agecare, HelpAge India, Mr. Mathew Cherian, CEO, HelpAge India, Mr. J. R. Gupta, Chairperson, Confederation of Senior Citizens Association of Delhi, Mr. A. B. Dey, Professor and Head, Department of Geriatric Medicine, Mr. Kiran Karnik, Chairperson, HelpAge India, Mr. M. Manmohan Sharma, Mission Director, National Health Mission, Shimla, Professor Siva Raju, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, AIIMS and Ms. Caitlin Littleton, Regional Program Officer, (Care & Health), HelpAge International.

The dire need for Homecare for Elderly in India was highlighted by a first-of-its-kind report released by HelpAge India at the national capital recently. HelpAge piloted homecare training projects in 3 locations – Leh (J&K), Shimla (HP) and Cuddalore (TN), which formed the basis of the report.

With a sample size of 2500 elder respondents, the report brought out the hard reality of the state of elder homecare in India. Elderly form nearly 9% of the country's population i.e. 106 million elderly, making India the second largest in global population of elderly citizens. Most of the elderly in the country live a life of destitution and suffer from ill health, neglect and abuse, a direct violation of their basic human and fundamental rights as provided by the Indian Constitution.

2 of the 3 States covered in the report, lagged behind in the parameters of provision of pension, shelters, geriatric care and medical facilities (with the exception of TN).

HelpAge runs active Homecare programs in all 3 locations, where a formal community entry strategy has been adopted – which includes explaining to the village Sarpanch and members about the project, taking their consent, seeking their inputs and carrying out community sensitization.

Given the significant jump in the elderly population in the coming years, in what is being termed as the "Grey Tsunami", our preparedness as a country is inadequate to say the least. The report is a clarion call for all stakeholders - Government, the private sector and community, to wake up to the issues of the elderly, especially those who are helpless and immobile.

## SALIENT FINDINGS

- 53.8% of elderly in the survey reported that they need help from others to carry out their Activities of Daily Living (ADL), things we normally do ourselves like - feeding, bathing, dressing, grooming, homemaking and leisure activities.
- 97.8% elderly reported the need for support in Instrumental Activity of Daily Living (IADL), specialised daily activities that require skill - ranging from travel to outside places, managing money, shopping etc.
- 59% of the elderly suffering from long-term disease required regular medication, in Cuddalore (70%) than in Leh (58.5%) and Shimla (48%).
- As compared to Shimla and Cuddalore, Leh reported a very high need of Homecare services (55.8%). The common health problems amongst the elderly were incontinence (32.5%), hearing (22.9%) and poor vision (21.1%).
- It is interesting to note that female elderly (57%), outnumbered male elderly in the need for help.
- Across all three locations it was observed that the preference for female care givers is substantially higher - Cuddalore (77%), Shimla (59.5%) and Leh (54%).
- More than three-fourths of the elderly (76%) preferred to have caregivers from the local population, the percentage was higher in Leh (96%) as against Shimla (81%) and Cuddalore (33%).
- 47% of the respondents who were 'bed bound & immobile' preferred family members and someone known to them to deliver the care. The percentage of the elderly preferring a caregiver referred by a known person, is highest in Shimla (68%) as compared to Cuddalore (41%) and Leh (39.5%).
- With regard to elderly, participation in physical activities, the percentage of those who use to take part in 'walking' daily is conspicuously higher in Shimla (78.6%) as compared to those in Leh (42.9%) and Cuddalore (16%).

## HOMECARE FOR THE ELDERLY

**Mr. Krishnan, 65 years old, lives in Pudhupalayam, Cuddalore (TN), with his wife, 2 daughters and son. Due to high blood pressure, he had a paralysis attack. The cost of living, medicines and treatment was too much and the family struggled hard to make ends meet. His eldest daughter is married while the younger daughter and son are in Chennai looking for job opportunities to help support the family. His wife works as a mason and takes care of him.**



*Krishnan was identified by homecare volunteer G. Manikkavali in April, 2018. Since then he has received regular care from Manikkavali, who not only helps Krishnan psychologically, but also assists him in simple tasks like bed-making and regular exercises. Blood pressure is monitored regularly to ensure stability of health and also physiotherapy exercises are done to improve his condition and help him with his mobility.*

*Today, Krishnan is happy with the service provided by the Homecare team. The Homecare program not only creates a big difference in the life of an elder, but also has a positive long term impact on the family both psychologically & financially.*



## PROJECT SILVER CYCLERS - Inspiring India's Elders!



Mr. Mathew Cherian (left), CEO, HelpAge India, flags off the last leg of the Silver Cyclothon in Delhi. In the centre is 70 year old Hari Baskaran, Silver Cyclist, along with elders from various Senior Citizens Associations of Delhi, who joined him to complete the last mile of the cyclothon.

HelpAge India's Project Silver Cyclers was aimed at bringing home the importance of 'Active Ageing' and staying fit in later years for our elders and also to draw attention to the critical needs of the elderly, focusing on old age homes which provide long term care for the elderly. The Cyclothon was led by the dynamic 70 year old, Hari Baskaran, who was joined by school children, senior citizens and HelpAge India staff to complete his journey of 4000 kms!

The Cyclothon commenced from Chennai in January and culminated in Delhi in March 2019. In a show of strength and a never-say-die spirit, Delhi's Senior Citizens in bright yellow T-shirts participated in the Cyclothon as the symbolic flag off, of

the last mile of the Silver Cyclothon was done. They were joined by young 15 – 16 year old students from Evergreen Senior Secondary School, Vasundhra Enclave, who came out in support of the silver generation.

Along his journey, Hari visited many old age homes and interacted with senior citizens and school children understanding and highlighting elder needs. As Hari completes the cyclothon, he leaves behind an extraordinary journey and has become an inspiration for both the young and the elderly proving that there is no age to fulfill your dreams.



“It has been an extraordinary journey for me personally. It has always been my dream to cycle across our country and I want to tell all my friends over 60 years to 'never stop dreaming, cause dreams do come true' and you must take care of your body, as only a healthy body can house a healthy mind. I have learnt so much about elder needs and have felt the urgent need to have quality care in old age home facilities, to look after those elders who are not so fortunate. I want to thank the HelpAge family, for the kindness & compassion with which I have been taken care of, it has made this journey possible and my dream come true – says Hari Baskaran, Silver Cyclist.”

## Heart warming 'Stories from the Field'

Providing hope & health, HelpAge continues to expand and grow its outreach programs and services reaching disadvantaged elders all across India. Here are some 'Stories from the Field - The Elder Voice'.



**Ramrathi, 82 years old**, has been a resident of Samalkha village, Haryana, for 45 years. Her husband passed away a few years ago and she lives with her son who runs a small tea shop in the village, where she helps out. She suffers from gastric problems, fever, cold and acute knee pain. A year ago, she heard about HelpAge India's Mobile Healthcare Unit (MHU) and since then she has been receiving free medicines and ointments regularly for her problems. Today, Ramrathi's condition has improved and she is happy with the services provided, as the medicines are given free of cost and she does not have to travel far, as the MHU comes virtually to her doorstep.

Her daughter-in-law has now also become a beneficiary of the MHU, as she had problems after her delivery.

“By providing elders like me free medicines, HelpAge has helped us a lot and given us back our health & dignity.” - says Ramrathi.



**Harendra (centre), 80 years old**, is a retired teacher and is suffering from multiple health problems, Diabetes being one of them. His wife is a Dementia patient who is also diabetic and bedridden. He has two sons and both are married. He somehow manages his house and expenditure from his meager pension and does not ask anything from his sons. However, he is still constantly harassed and physically abused. He has even been threatened by his younger son, who keeps asking for money. Harendra despite facing the odds, refuses to give in, to his son's demands. His elder son and his wife are both doctors by profession and run a clinic, however his younger son and his wife are jobless and therefore face a financial crunch. His elder son reached out to HelpAge India, to bring his brother to justice.

On HelpAge's request, Sonmoni Saikia, Incharge of Itachali Police Station, led an investigation and spoke to the family and told them that a regular check on the situation will be maintained. His younger son finally confessed to assaulting his father and has now given an undertaking in writing, that he will no longer harass his father for money. Sonmoni appreciated HelpAge India for the quick response and intervention in the matter. Today, the harassment has stopped and Harendra feels safer, knowing that someone out there is looking out for him.



HelpAge India's Helpline team rescued **Shenbagavalli, 76 years old**, from Kolathur, Chennai, Tamil Nadu after finding her abandoned on the road. She is survived by a son and daughter, while her husband is in a mental health institution. Her daughter is too poor to take care of her needs and her son is medically unfit. The HelpAge Helpline team contacted the daughter and received permission to get

Shenbagavalli admitted in an old age home in Kodungaiyur, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, where she would be secure and well taken care of. A happy Shenbagavalli today thanks HelpAge India & L & T Construction (project donor) for providing her shelter and a home away from home.



## STUDENT ACTION FOR VALUE EDUCATION (SAVE)

What makes a person good? Their core sense of good values. These are imbibed within them at a very young age. Schools & educational institutions play a vital role in forming them as a complete human being who has an inherent sense of right & wrong and treats those around them with love, care & respect. HelpAge India's oldest association has been with schools over the past 40 years. We are extremely grateful to all the schools who have supported the elder cause and helped imbibe the right values within children at an early age.

### MADURAI – Tamil Nadu



Mr. C. Radhakrishnan, Senior Manager, HelpAge India, Tamil Nadu, addresses school children of Sourashtra Nursery & Primary School, Madurai, Tamil Nadu, sensitizing them about the issues faced by elders in our country.

### WARANGAL - Andhra Pradesh



Senior Staff of Warangal Public School hand over a donation of Rs. 12.01 lakh to Mohd. Raza Mohammed (third from left), State Head, AP & Telangana, HelpAge India. This is the highest ever

donation by a single school so far, in the states of AP & Telangana.

### AURANGABAD - Maharashtra



Ms. Tanvi Ambadas Gaikwad, Student of Class II, St. John's High School, Aurangabad, Maharashtra, collected Rs. 21,000 for the cause of the elderly. HelpAge thanks Tanvi for her incredible support and sensitivity for the elder cause at such a young age!

## GRASS ROOT ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

### AKBARPUR – Uttar Pradesh



An awareness and health camp was organized at the Mobile Healthcare Unit (MHU) site in Akbarpur, UP, where the beneficiaries were informed about various govt. health schemes like 'Ayushman Bharat' scheme which aim to be beneficial to them in the long run.

### PATIALA – Punjab



HelpAge Patiala team, organized a campaign related to social security at Rajiv Gandhi National Law University, Punjab, along with the District Legal Services Authority. 12 villages from Patiala participated in the campaign with an aim to help elders fill their respective forms to get access to social security schemes.

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Health is one of the biggest concerns for elders in our country, and therefore providing basic healthcare to disadvantaged elders, is one of the main focus areas of HelpAge India. We are extremely grateful for the generosity and support of our donors for supporting our healthcare initiatives, especially our Mobile Healthcare Unit (MHU) program, which provides free basic medical care to disadvantaged elders and their community, adding quality and hope to their lives.

### HYDERABAD – Andhra Pradesh



Mr. Charles Phillips (fourth from right), CEO, Infor, Global ERP Solution Company, USA, hands over the key of the new MHU in Asifabad, Hyderabad, donated by the company, to Mr. Mohd. Raza Mohammed (third from left), State Head, AP & Telangana, HelpAge India, at the inauguration ceremony. Looking on are staff members from both organizations.

### RAMPUR – Uttar Pradesh



HelpAge India, Uttar Pradesh, in association with Isthams Industries Pvt. Ltd. inaugurate a new MHU in old Anaa j Mandi Bilaspur, Rampur, UP. The event is

flagged off by MLA Sh. Badlev Singh Aulakh and is attended by the State Minister, and other important dignitaries of Isthams Industries Pvt. Ltd. along with HelpAge India staff.

### DURGAPUR – West Bengal



A new MHU for Durgapur donated by Shyam Steel, which is also covering its running cost for 3 years, is inaugurated by Mr. Deepak Choudhury, Vice President (Commercial & Unit Head) in the presence of Ms. Sharmila Majumder (second from right), State Head, West

Bengal, HelpAge India, and other Departmental Heads and the CSR Team.

### CHENNAI – Tamil Nadu



Mrs. Kavery Kalanithi Maran, Executive Director, Sun TV Network, hands over a donation to Mr. V. Sivakumar (right), State Head, Tamil Nadu, HelpAge India, for the running cost of two MHUs, at Vadipatti and Tirunelveli, in Tamil Nadu. Looking on is Mr. Edwin Babu (left), Joint Director - Programs, HelpAge India.

### KOLKATA – West Bengal



Ms. Ishita Roy (centre), CEO, Khadims, Kolkata, hands over the donation by Khadims, to cover the running cost for 3 years of the Kolkata MHU to Ms. Sharmila Majumder (second from right), State Head, West Bengal, HelpAge India. Looking on are Mr. Indrajit Chowdhury (second from left), CFO,

Khadims, Kolkata and Ms. Satamita Datta (right), Special Protection Officer and Ms. Indrani Sen (left), Joint Director, Resource Mobilization, both from the HelpAge India, West Bengal team.

### CHENNAI – Tamil Nadu



Inauguration of the 'Infrastructural Support to Old Age Homes in and around Chennai' project supported by L&T Construction underway. Through this project, 5 old age homes will be provided with the free infrastructural support. The inauguration is being attended by CDR. Manjunatha S. (centre), Head CSR & CSTI, L&T Construction; Mr. V. Siva Kumar (fifth from left), State Head, Tamil Nadu, HelpAge India, Mr. Selvaraj Boaz (fourth from left), Managing Trustee, Little Drops, Assisted Living Facility for Elders, Tamil Nadu, Mr. Edwin Babu, Joint Director, Programs, HelpAge India, Mr. R. Rajasekara Pandey (fifth from right), Senior Manager, CSR, L&T Construction, along with other residents of Little Drops - Assisted Living Facility.

**SPECIAL MENTION:** The Oberoi Group - for their renewed support towards 2 MHUs at Agra (UP) and Shimla (HP) and TEVA - for supporting 3 MHUs and cataract surgeries across 7 locations.

