



## **Introduction**

Pravas Project is a field action project started by the College of Social Work Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai to help the senior citizens living in the Urban Marginalized Communities. The project was initiated to form self-supporting groups of senior citizens. The College of Social Work had organized a National Conference on Healthy Ageing in Dec 2018 at the College Extension Centre in Goregaon East, Mumbai in which many papers on elderly issues were presented by the professionals and the plan of action was decided in the conference. The concept arose from the proceedings of this National Conference and Pravas Project was started by the College. It aims to create awareness among the elderly population about healthy ageing and to provide Health Service Facilities and Senior Citizen Cards so that they can avail government facilities that are specially designed for them. Final goal of the project is to work towards promoting 'Healthy Ageing' for underprivileged elderly and hence it works dedicatedly to understand their care and protection in a community setting. This project is focusing more on creating a safe space and blissful environment for the senior citizens along with strong support systems.

### **Project Implemented by:**

1. Dr. Lidwin Dias, Principal, College of Social Work (Autonomous), Nirmala Niketan
2. Dr. Sonia Rodrigues, Faculty In-Charge, Pravas Project
3. Ms. Nilima Rodrigues, Associate Director, Extension Centre, College of Social Work
4. Ms. Swati Rane, Program Officer, Pravas Project
5. Mr. Shankar Suryavanshi, Paraprofessional Social Worker cum Office Assistant

### **Students Social Workers (SSWs) placed in the year from College of Social Work:**

1. Ms. Sneha Asalkar, BSW-II
2. Ms. Samrudhi Sonavane, BSW-II
3. Ms. Shravani Raut, BSW-III
4. Mr. Saumitra Patil, BSW-III

### **Socio Demographic Profile**

The beneficiaries of the Pravas Project are Elderly Domestic Workers whose age group is 55 and above and who are engaged in informal labour and because of their age and occupation they come under the most vulnerable sections of the society. They are mostly retired, jobless due to the pandemic and undergoing health issues.

The project began in Bhagat Singh Nagar No. 1, 2 and 3, in Chatrapati Vasahat and in Indira Nagar at Goregaon West, Mumbai. Now the project has been expanded to Santosh Nagar and Vitt Bhatti communities at Goregaon East. As the name rightly denotes, 'Pravas Project' means 'Travel/ Walk' and hence it works with the elderly in these communities to make their travel of life easier and more comfortable.

The Pravas Project believes that by strengthening democratic processes, nurturing a spirit of comradery, adopting scientific approaches to social welfare and by mobilising the assets brought forth by every individual, it can provide comprehensive solutions to social problems. These communities live in a large slum colony. This group of senior citizens are generally unlike the ones belonging to the upper-class sections of society as they are generally composed of migrants whose livelihoods depend on the informal sector.

The various activities and programmes conducted by Pravas Project for the senior citizens during the academic year, 2024-25 are presented here. Total individual beneficiaries during the year are 188 senior citizens.

## **A. Livelihood Generation and Skill Development Programme Initiatives**

Keeping in mind the vision and mission of Parvas Project, that is to reach out to the elderly and make them independent and productive, the Extension Centre organised a livelihood programme to help the senior citizens to be independent and stand on their own feet.

### **1. Candle and Agarbatti Production**

The Pravas Project staff and 9 senior citizens collectively made a total production of Candles and Agarbattis of Rs.41,500/-, at the Extension Centre on 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> August and 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024. The senior citizens enjoyed the process. Day by day this process is helping the senior citizens to be more confident as the process is giving them an opportunity of connect with the otherworld. Senior citizens also could involve themselves in some productive and independent activity, wherein they got an opportunity to use their skills which they learnt. This production gave senior citizens the confidence to be independent and self-sufficient. And it has changed their attitude and perspective towards life.

### **2. Soap Making Training**

The Pravas Project organised 2 days 'Soap Making' training programme on 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> September 2024 for urban marginalised 9 senior citizens of Bhagat Singh Nagar Community & Vitt-Bhatti Community. The training was held at Goregaon Campus of College of Social Work. Mr. Sharad Gogawale, Independent Soap Making Trainer was the resource person.

This training programme taught the skills of making normal Soap, Ayurvedic Soap and Facewash. During the training, they also gave the training on how to make the different sizes of soaps by using mould's. The senior citizens were enthusiastic and felt happy to take this training. This training gave them an opportunity to acquire more skills.

### **3. Marketing & Selling of Candles & Agarbatties**

Marketing & selling of the Candles and Agarbatties is very important to provide the market to the products and to generate the income by selling the products made by the senior citizens. Hence, the Pravas Project staff used different strategies to approach the different groups, NGOs and individuals. They approached the alumni group of Senior Citizens of College of Social Work and put the stalls in different churches like St. Thomas Church, St. Joseph Church, St. Blaise Church with the help of SSWs of Nirmala Niketan. Anubhav Youth Development Centre welcomed the judges and guests of Theme Day program by giving them candle boxes. Pravas team have done a total Aggarbattis and Candles sale of Rs.25030/- during the year. The profit is shared among all the senior citizens involved in the production.

## **B. Promoting Health and Wellbeing through Preventive, Promotive and Curative models of intervention**

Pravas Project conducted the various activities like sessions, workshops, Yoga sessions, medical screenings and medical camps. Total beneficiaries were 188 senior citizens. The details of the activities are as below:

### **1. Creative Sessions/ Workshops with Elderly for Promotion of Psychological Well-being**

Pravas Project organised several creative sessions/ workshops like Stress Relief, Identifying Feelings, expressing happiness through different therapies, discussions, workshops etc. throughout the year with elderly for promotion of psychological well-being. The outcome of these sessions / workshops was as below:

- **Importance of Water in our body:** The workshop conducted on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at Bhagatsingh Nagar in which 17 senior citizens participated. The same workshop was conducted on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at Vitt-Bhatti community in which 11 senior citizens participated. The resource person was Ms. Swati Rane & Mr. Shankar Suryavanshi. They had conducted different activities and shared different benefits of drinking atleast 3 liter of water in a day. This session was to spread the awareness in senior citizens about the importance of water in human body and motivating them to drink required amount of water.
- **Stress Free:** The session conducted on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2024 at Vitt-Bhatti Community. The resource persons were Student Social Workers. The main focus of the session was on fears which senior citizens feels in their age. They emphasizes on to become a fearless to be Stress free and healthy in their life. A total of 13 members attended this session.
- **Parkinson's, Dementia & Stroke Disease:** The workshop was conducted on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2024 at Extension Centre, Goregaon East. The resource person was Dr. Riya Shah and Ms. Assumption Cardozo from Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorder Society (PDMDS) and the Neurological Foundation (NF). The workshop objective was to educate senior citizens on common neurological issues faced by the elderly, specifically focusing on Parkinson's disease, stroke, and dementia. The resource persons had emphasizes on balanced diet, avoiding unhealthy

habits and coping mechanisms for senior citizens. The session was interactive and activity bases. Total beneficiaries were 42 senior citizens.

- **Nutrition for Elderly and Age related Health Changes Session:** Pravas Project organised the Nutrition for Elderly and Age related Health Changes Session at Extension Centre, Goregaon East, on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2024. The resource persons were Dr. Sheetal Joshi and Prof. Fizza Shaikh, the Faculty of Home Science College, Nirmala Niketan. Total 51 senior citizens took the benefit of the session.
- **Caregiver Programme:** Two activities has been conducted under Caregiver Programme. First, the session on Caregiver conducted on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2024 at Extension Centre, Goregaon East. Mr. Sailesh Mishra, Director, Silver Inning and Adv. Sharon Rodrigues from Health Promotion Trust were the resource persons. The resource persons shared about the Alzheimer and Dementia Diseases. They also conducted one memory game. Dr. Lidwin Dias, Principal, College of Social Work was present for the session. Skill Development Training Certificates has been awarded to 9 members who has completed the training. Total 69 senior citizens attended the session. Second, Caregiver Training has been conducted on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2024 at College of Social Work, Goregaon Campus. Dr. Nagnath Prem, Chief Consultant of Geriatrician, Jaslok Hospital, Mumbai was the resource person. He shared the inputs on how to deal with the Alzheimer and Dementia patients. He also shared some practical examples about patient's behaviours and to tackle the situation. Total 52 senior citizens participated in the training.
- **Session on Physiotherapy and Nutrients:** On 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024, the sessions were conducted at College of Social Work, Goregaon Campus. The resource persons were Dr. Sheetal Joshi, Prof. Fizza Shaikh and Dr. Bhartidevi, the Faculties of Home Science College, Nirmala Niketan. A total of 54 senior citizens took the benefit. The different physical exercises / body movements has been conducted by the resource persons. The resource persons had brought the Legume Food to show and to share the importance of the same. They also gave them to eat some healthy foods which they had brought with them. This session helped the participants to understand what, when and how they can take the Nutrients food.
- **Session on Health & Hygiene:** The session was conducted on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at Bhagatsingh Nagar community. A total of 16 senior citizens participated in the session. Student Social Workers conducted the sessions. The objectives were to inform senior citizens how to stay clean and healthy every day. The goal was to help them manage their medicines properly and follow simple health habits. These tips would make them feel confident and help them live independently.
- **Mandala Art:** The session was conducted on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at Vitt-Bhatti community. A total of 16 senior citizens participated in the session. Student Social Workers conducted the sessions. The Mandala Art session aimed to give senior citizens a chance to express themselves through art, helping them feel relaxed and happy. The activity was also planned to improve their hand movements, focus, and confidence.
- **Art of Living Session:** The session was conducted on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at Bhagatsingh Nagar community. A total of 25 senior citizens participated in the session. Para-Professional Student

Social Worker Ms. Natasha Shaikh and Mr. Shankar Suryavanshi conducted the sessions in which they have spread the awareness with the help of Yoga and Meditation.

## **2. Medical Health Camps**

The Pravas Project had organised 2 free health check-up camps the below are the details:

- a. The Health check-up camp had been organised in collaboration with Help Age India on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2024 at Bhagatsingh Nagar Community, Goregaon East. The basic check-ups like Diabetes, Blood Pressure, Hemoglobin level, Pulse rate and other general issues were addressed in the camp. They also provided the medicines to the beneficiaries. Total 30 senior citizens took the benefit of the camp.
- b. On 23rd November 2024 the Cancer Screening Camp had organized in Collaboration with Tata Hospital, at College of Social Work, Nirmala Niketan, Goregaon Campus. The Oral Screening, Breast Screening and General Screening has been done in the camp. Total 79 senior citizens and other age group people got benefited from this camp. Out of that doctors had suggested to do the Mammography, Sonography and few Blood Tests of 26 suspected participants at Tata Hospital, Parel. Out of these 26, the 4 members has been suggested to do the further tests to identify the reasons of some symptoms.

These camps helped the senior citizen members to identify their health issues and to work on the same with free of cost and in some cases at minimum cost. Some of the poorest senior citizens who don't have any support and cannot go for treatment got an opportunity. Some of the senior citizens were able to know their health conditions.

## **3. Yoga Sessions: Three days in a week for entire year in the community to promote healthy aging (32 Senior Citizens)**

The Pravas Project had initiated this programme to improve the physical and mental health of the Senior Citizens. To achieve this objective, Pravas Project team hired Certified Yoga Trainer, Ms. Sakshi Oza to conduct the yoga sessions and since November month Mr. Shankar Suryavanshi is conducting the yoga sessions which he and participants has learnt from Ms. Sakshi Oza. The process should not stop and since they have experience the importance of Yoga, with the self-motivation the members are continuously doing the Yoga under the guidance and supervision of Mr. Shankar Suryavanshi. The number of beneficiaries increased gradually from 20 members to 40 members and now to 55 members. The participants are getting benefits from this initiative and hence they are sharing and motivating other senior citizens to join yoga sessions. Hence, till date, total 40 senior citizens have taken the benefit of this training programme. The outcome of the training programme has been seen through below sharing of the participants:

- a. Getting good sleep,
- b. Body flexibility has been improved,
- c. Helped to lose their weight,
- d. Reduced knee pain and improved the movement capacity,
- e. Reduced body aches and pains,
- f. Some members who are highly motivated and trained, conduct the yoga training in absence of a yoga teacher.

#### **4. Ayushman Bharat Health Card**

Pravas Project has made the Ayushman Bharat Health Card of 12 Pravas members of Bhagatsingh Nagar and Vitt-Bhatti Community. The card will provide a health cover of Rs. 5 lakhs per family per policy (in a year) for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization in any of empanelled hospitals across the country. The benefit is available to each and every member of the family on a floater basis.

### **C. Interventions towards the Knowledge Building and Strengthening of the Group**

Pravas Project organized several activities for the knowledge building and strengthening of the group in which overall 110 senior citizens got involved. The outcome of it helped in increasing the knowledge about different topics which are beneficial to senior citizens, bonding of team members, rapport building with each team member and with their family members, brought the smile on their face, it also helped the organization to build more trust on the staff/ organization.

Pravas Project staff and SSWs organised the educational and group work sessions namely; Group Bonding, Friendship Day, Inter-religious Festival Celebration, Social connections & Home Visits. Total 5 sessions have been organised by the Pravas Project team with the help of SSWs. All these activities helped to motivate the senior citizens to discuss, share and motivate each other. It also helped to keep them engaged in different activities which led to mental peace. Day by day they are becoming more active and vibrant.

#### **1. Home Visits**

During the year, the Pravas Project staff and the SSWs paid the regular home visits to Pravas members. These visits helped the staff to interact with the family members of the senior citizens. It also helped to understand the current needs and situations of each family member. These visits helped Pravas Project team to update and prepare a need-based action plan and motivate the members to take active participation in the plan. It has been observed that home visit is a very important tool for effective intervention.

#### **2. Group Bonding Session**

Group Bonding session was conducted in Vit-Bhatti community on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2024 and in Bhagatsingh Nagar Community on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2024. Total 24 senior citizens participated in the session. Pravas Project Staff and SSWs took various activities namely group games to help them to build the bonding among themselves. All the members enjoyed the games and got connected with each other. These activities also helped to build the rapport between the members, staff and SSWs.

#### **3. Friendship Day Celebration**

On 9<sup>th</sup> August 2024 at Bhagatsingh Nagar and on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2024 in Vit-Bhatti community, Pravas Project team conducted the ‘Friendship Day Celebration’. The objectives were that, the Celebrating Friendship Day can serve as a reminder to seniors that they are not alone and that they have a network of friends who care about them. Honour the value of friendship, companionship, and community among seniors, reinforcing a sense of belonging and connection. Engages seniors in a fun, creative activity that stimulates their minds and hands. To achieve the above objectives, student social

workers conducted the different practical activities like making the friendship band by using Ice-cream sticks and then sharing feelings about their friends. Total 23 senior citizens had took the active part in the celebration.

#### **4. Inter-religious Festivals Celebrations**

Pravas Project organised an Inter-religious Festivals Celebrations of urban marginalised senior citizens. Total 93 senior citizens were part of these Inter-religious Festivals Celebrations programmes which were held on 24<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> October and 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2024. The Pravas Project tried to celebrate the interreligious festivals to give a message of hope and togetherness. The main objective was to bring happiness, bring them back into the fold and give them a ray of hope and support.

First celebration was organized in Bhagatsingh Nagar community, the second one was in Vit-Bhatti and the third & fourth were organized in the Extension Centre of College of Social Work at Goregaon East. Dr. Lidwin Dias, Principal of the College, Dr. Sonia Rodrigues, Associate Professor, Ms. Swati Rane, Program Officer and Mr. Shankar Suryavanshi, Para-Social Worker were the part of the celebrations. The senior citizens enjoyed the celebration and shared their experience and learnings through the developmental programs of Pravas Project. The below were the objectives behind the celebrations:

1. To celebrate the inter-religious festivals and to discuss the importance of all the festivals.
2. To strengthen a sense of community and unity among the members.
3. To provide a space for members to observe and celebrate the cultural and religious significance of religions.
4. To ensure that all members feel included and part of the festive celebration, fostering a sense of togetherness.
5. To create opportunities for members to connect, interact and build positive relationships within the community.

#### **5. Session on Social Connections**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024 at Bhagatsingh Nagar, Pravas Student Social Workers conducted the session on 'Social Connections'. The Social connections for the elderly are about building and maintaining relationships with family, friends, and the community. As people age, staying socially active becomes important for mental, emotional, and physical well-being. These connections help reduce feelings of loneliness, boost happiness, and even improve health by providing support and companionship. Activities like volunteering, or simply spending time with loved ones can make a big difference in keeping seniors connected and engaged with the world around them. Looking to the all the above things Pravas team conducted the session with help of activities and discussion.

## **D. Implementation of Government Schemes**

### **1. Implementation of Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana**

Pravas Project has implemented the Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana in Vit-Bhatti and Bhagatsingh Nagar Communities in the month of August – September 2024. The total beneficiaries were 36. Pravas staff done complete documentation process of Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana the result of which all 36 womens received the amount in their account.

#### **Outcome:**

- One of the primary outcomes was to help the eligible community womens to avail the benefit of the government scheme.
- To help the community womens to get some monetary benefit, which will help them to fulfill atleast basic need.
- It will also help the Pravas team to build a rapport with community people, which will help the team to get more support from the community for more effective implementation of the project.

#### **❖ Outcome of the Pravas Project's Programmes and Activities**

1. One Hundred & Eighty-Eight senior citizens benefited.
2. Smoothly implemented the Pravas activities in a new community namely Vit-Bhatti, Goregaon East, Mumbai.
3. Increase in the Skill of Soap making.
4. Helped senior citizens with their cognitive functions and also to improve their limb movement and coordination.
5. Helped in increasing the bonding of team members of both the communities.
6. Rapport building with each team member and their family members.
7. Helped to spread the awareness on the preventive health measures among the senior citizens and among their family members.
8. Helped to improve the physical and mental health of group members.
9. They learnt and understood the techniques of healthy living.
10. Self-motivation about the yoga helping in self-sustaining the yoga training programme in Bhagatsingh Nagar Community.
11. Helped to bring joy and a smile to the faces of senior citizens.
12. Centre level activities helped to create more bonding and to build more trust in Pravas Project.

❖ **Challenges faced by the Project**

- Sustaining the community place.
- Brining the Muslim senior citizens in Hindu Temple for community level activities, as this is the only place available in the community.
- The population is a migrating population. The number of members are high but the active members are few.