

Report on Arpana's Project for the Disabled

March 2013

Arpana's project in 35 villages of Karnal and Gharaunda block is addressing the capacity building and economic rehabilitation of persons with disabilities (PwDs) including poor people in the community through community based micro credit collectives.

The disabled are marginalized and unable to avail of their entitlements in education, healthcare and livelihoods etc. Although both the central and state government have a number of development schemes for people with disabilities, yet they are unable to avail of these due to lack of awareness, lack of community support and lack of will amongst the government functionaries. The community at large also needs to be sensitized and educated about persons with disabilities.

The upscaling of persons with disabilities (PwDs), can be resolved through the agency of self help groups which promote micro enterprises and diverse options for self employment and a process of holistic development.

By employing disabled inclusive strategies, self help groups (SHGs) enable members to resolve most of the problems faced by PwDs, especially the issues related to their poverty. Further it leads to mainstreaming of PwDs in the social and cultural life of the villages. The formation of disabled inclusive SHGs and their micro businesses contributes to enhancing the quality of life of the PwDs in their communities.

The health care needs of PwDs are also met by Arpana through holding mobile clinics on a small scale, and through facilitating health camps so that all patients' follow up treatment can be put on record and perused.

During the past year, Arpana Research & Charities Trust was registered as an agency working for the disabled. The Trust is also registered with FCRA.

Mainstreaming of Differently Abled People

To organize for the differently abled is a three pronged process. This has been set up since May 2012, to build a strong foundation for interventions to empower the differently abled persons in the present target area of 35 villages.

1. Monthly visits to the homes of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) to understand their difficulties and to build an understanding with the family through bonds of trust & confidence.
2. Mobilizing PwDs and families to form village based Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs) as a platform for development and empowerment, economic security and rightful access to entitlements.



3. Motivate disabled women to become active members of Arpana's services and existing self help groups, thus building up savings and having access to credit for livelihoods.
4. Identifying needs of disabled persons for corrective surgery, remedial therapy, assistive devices, etc
Attempts to collect funds for such special needs, is an on going effort by Arpana; as such needs are not covered by project funding.

All these efforts being made are having encouraging results:

- The home visits are building trust and confidence with PwDs and families



- Mobilization of PwDs to form DPOs in their villages, has resulted in 26 disabled persons organizations formed, with their accounts opened in neighboring banks.
- Membership of PwDs is now 498.
- Seed money for common expenses has been deposited in each DPO account. All DPOs now have their related president and secretary, many of who are giving active support to Arpana workers.
- 78 disabled women have become members of SHG groups.

In June, after discussions between workers and PwDs who are members of DPOs, it was decided that all members without disability certificates should be screened at Karnal Civil Hospital. Since the first Wednesday of July 2012, the Project Supervisor took a batch of 8-10 PwDs for their screenings every Wednesday.

112 PwDs have been screened and have obtained disability certificates. 9, who are deaf and mute, have been referred to Rohtak Post Graduate Institute.



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| • Total number of villages where DPOs have been formed | 26 |
| • Total number of DPOs who have opened accounts | 26 |
| • Total number of differently abled people who are members in the DPOs | 498 |
| • Total number of DPOs where saving component is in action | 26 |
| • Total number of DPOs who are members in the PwDs Federation | 26 |
| • Total number of DPO meetings held in the reporting year | 208 |

Capacity Building of DPO Leaders

Training Has Been Given On:



- Federation
- Entitlement
- Leadership
- Record Keeping
- Goals & Objectives
- Micro Planning
- Group Strengthening
- Fundamental Rights of PwDs



Exposure Visit of DPO leaders

In October 2012, DPO members visited the government offices, learning many things and gaining confidence and experience. They visited the District Offices of:



- Education
- Employment
- Social Welfare

Exposure visits	2
Villages participated	15
DPO leaders participated	26



Progress Made During the Past Year

- 78 disabled women are now members of SHGs facilitated by Arpana and have a savings pool and credit resource.
- 26 DPOs have been formed and 98% members are doing savings each month. All DPOs have had Rs.1,000 deposited to open their group accounts out of the seed capital provided by CBM.
- The Federation has been formed, in which process all DPO members and leaders have been partners in evolving the mission, as well as its norms and structure. Leaders were elected and the balance of the seed money deposited in the Federation account.
- 22 DPOs have become members of the Federation and have deposited their membership fees etc. and began depositing savings in the Federation from January, 2013.
- Thus 498 disabled persons are now building a savings and a credit response for the future.
- A process of community sensitization and integration has been initiated by widespread film shows arranged by SHGs and DPO members, working together. Discussions were held with the audience prior to the viewing. 65% members of the audiences responded positively after the film shows and admitted their own lack of awareness on disability issues.

- Networking meetings were conducted to arrange village events with DPO leaders participating and working with SHG women.
- DPO leaders and members have continued to be trained in conducting DPO meetings effectively: leadership skills, including group management skills, are being built up. Training on entitlements and procedures to access them, and exposure visits to relevant District Level offices, were organized which resulted in the enhanced confidence of all leaders.
- Three children have been provided tricycles through special donations and three more children have been identified for tricycles.
- A mentally disabled young girl is undergoing rehabilitation and therapy in Arpana Hospital.
- Eight disabled children are attending special classes arranged by Arpana with the block education department.
- A mentally disabled young girl is undergoing rehabilitation in Arpana Hospital.
- 8 disabled children are attending special classes arranged by Arpana with the Government Block Education Department.
- 3 children have been provided tricycles to make them mobile, through special donations, and 3 more children have been identified for tricycles.



*Virat, Rahul and Sahara received their tricycles at Arpana on 22nd Sept. 2013.
A fierce excitement shone in their faces as they began using the machines to seize their freedom.*
