

# 2020-21 ANNUAL REPORT



*Snehalaya*

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# OUR VISION

To develop the awareness and capabilities of individuals who have been deprived of their fundamental rights as a result of the inequalities that exist in our society.

# OUR MISSION

To provide rescue, rights and rehabilitative services to the communities in most need. To offer a safe exit point to women and their children trapped in the crippling cycle of poverty and abuse.



**Rehabilitation**  
**4,278**  
beneficiaries

**Health**  
**2,946**  
beneficiaries

**Education**  
**2,351**  
beneficiaries

**Awareness**  
**253,000**  
beneficiaries

**COVID Relief**  
**340,000**  
beneficiaries

**Total 2021-22**  
**567,975**  
beneficiaries



# OUR HISTORY

Girish Kulkarni grew up in Ahmednagar enjoying life in a middle class, loving and supportive family. At eight years old he was taking a short cut between classes. This took him through one of the city's red-light areas where, wandering through the narrow alleys, he regularly saw girls his own age sat outside brothels selling their bodies to the highest bidder. Even at this young age the injustice of being born into a poor situation had a profound impact on him, especially when he saw a naked child being beaten and tortured. Her crime? She had contracted syphilis and was no longer able to work. The young Girish felt powerless to help and his inability to intervene haunted him into early adulthood.

When Girish started college, he was reminded of what he had witnessed when a friend took him to the red-light area where his mother, sister and grandmother were all sex workers. He had joined youth volunteer organisations but their slogans of changing the world didn't seem to offer the direct action he felt was necessary. Realising that his own time and resources were limited but also wanting to ease his conscience he decided to think globally but act locally. He thought: "How can I change the lives of at least a few people?" He approached some sex workers to ask them how he could help and they said, "Take our children".

Each day Girish would turn up to pick up two children and take them to a park, buy them snacks, tell them stories or teach them how to ride bikes. Word soon spread and within four months he was entertaining 80 children and building the trust and respect of the sex worker community. In 1989, Girish founded Snehalaya, appointing three sex workers as trustees. When HIV and AIDS started ravaging the community, Girish set up a Death with Dignity program, a few roadside huts and a bike attached to a cart which provided palliative care to some of India's first AIDS casualties.

As you can see over the next few pages, Girish's interventions three decades ago prove that small actions can have a large impact. Today, our 23 projects, that over 200,000 people have benefitted from, save countless lives and give dignity back to those marginalised by society.



# FROM OUR SECRETARY

Greetings from Snehalaya family and welcome to our Annual Report for the year 2020-21. This year was a massive challenge for us all as the first wave of the COVID 19 pandemic took force. While we tried to continue our normal services, our teams and supporters also rose to the challenge of reaching out to and providing support to the most vulnerable during these unprecedented times.

When the pandemic hit us, we started Mission Rahat to support our sex worker, transgender (TG), slum, people living with HIV/AIDS (PLHA) and tribal communities facing starvation due to lockdown. In collaboration with like-minded partners, we ensured all received grocery kits for at least three months. More than 3,00,000 people were provided food, clothing, medicines and health services. In addition, we set up roadside stalls to support 40,000 migrant workers, helping them to return to their homes safely using private and public transport. We also ensured that the children in our shelter homes and Balbhavan received uninterrupted education in spite of schools being closed. Our children were kept engaged in innovative activities designed by our staff so that their mental as well as physical health was preserved. Older girls and boys and women living in our shelter home took responsibility for preparing food, keeping the premises clean and even stitching masks for all.

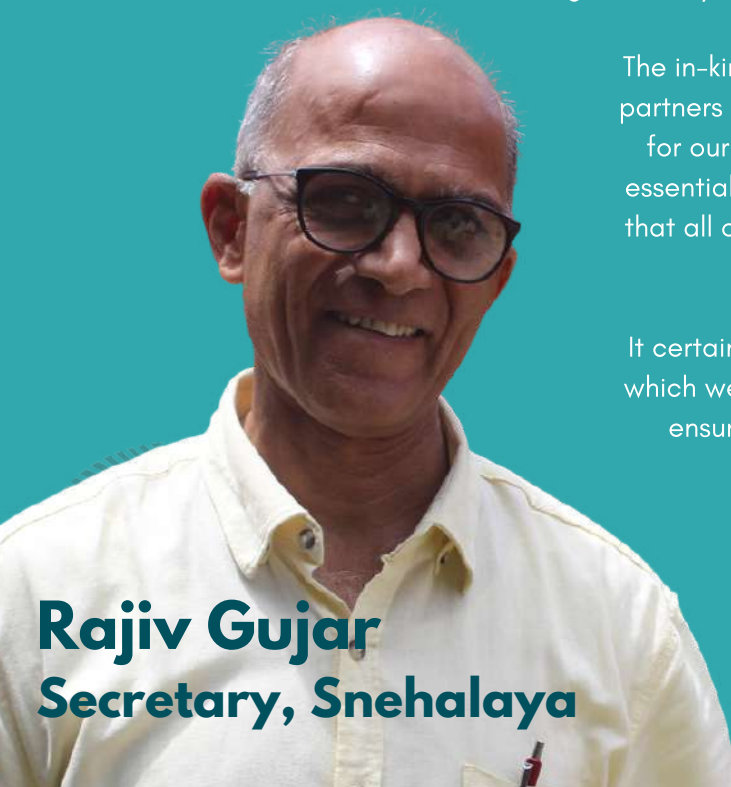
Our adoption center too faced the challenge of protecting infants. Our 26 caretakers and three nurses stayed on site to look after our babies. Infants in need of surgeries and special care were also successfully treated. When the CARA adoption process stopped, the number of our infants exceeded our capacity, yet we continued to provide them the love and care they need. The calls of women and girls facing domestic violence, sexual abuse and unwanted pregnancies also rose. Special permissions were sought by Snehadhar, One-Stop Center and Snehankur to rescue and protect and provide safe haven to these women and girls. Rising numbers of child marriages in our district were tackled by our Childline team, who stopped 88 marriages.

As the first wave subsided, we saw a relative return to normal, celebrating the 10th birthday of our community radio, Radio Nagar, which reaches almost 2,50,000 listeners in a 20 km radius. Our matrimonial meet, to help PLHA find their perfect match, is a unique initiative of Snehalaya and was able to continue online meaning since 2004, 65 Snehalaya daughters have found life partners, 18 of whom have given birth to HIV negative children. Most of them attended our homecoming ceremony, held during Diwali, with their husbands and kids.

The in-kind support we received was overwhelming. Toys and shoes from partners such as Wishing Well and Step Up made Christmas extra special for our children. Grocery and hygiene materials, stationery and other essential commodities from DonateKart and State Bank of India ensured that all our beneficiaries received proper nutrition and maintained good health throughout the pandemic.

It certainly was a year of unprecedented circumstances and challenges which we turned into opportunities to reach out to our beneficiaries and ensure their safety with no cases of COVID in our Rehab Center.

We only came out of the first wave safe and sound thanks to the unconditional support and blessings of our well-wishers, donors and supporters. There are and will be more testing times ahead, but I know we can overcome all of this with you by our side. Stay safe and healthy, get vaccinated and continue to protect yourself from COVID.



**Rajiv Gujar**  
Secretary, Snehalaya



**Sanjay Gogle**  
**President, Snehalaya**

# FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Namaskar from the Snehalaya family and a heartfelt thank you to all of you for supporting us in a million different ways to do good in the world every single day! Looking back today, we realise that we have come a long way in helping people in need, but we still have a much longer journey ahead of us. Snehalaya's mission has always been to ease the lives of people in society. However, in the last year, we have had to face many unprecedented challenges.

COVID-19's first wave was devastating as people's livelihoods disappeared and we were worried about our children living at Snehalaya. But, with the excellent planning of the team and some strict discipline, Snehalaya came out of these trying times, safe and sound. We took care of ourselves and made sure that we followed the norms to stay safe while also chalking out new schemes to help the victims of the pandemic.

This includes a range of initiatives, which you will read about in this report, to support people all over Ahmednagar District and beyond, helping many who otherwise would have starved or succumbed to the virus. During these tough times, we also experienced some positive news. Despite the enormous disruptions to their exams, our Snehalaya English Medium School's first batch of 10 std students achieved a 100% pass rate, as did all of our 12th std children. We also heard from past students doing well. When a kid like Parshuram comes to Snehalaya at the age of six and grows up to become a successful chef in Dubai, it feels like the efforts put by our team are completely worth it. It feels like the completion of a whole cycle.

As we move ahead after experiencing the good and the bad in this past year, we stand strong with an even mightier resolution to keep doing good in the lives of people and make all of you proud. We truly hope that you and your loved ones stay safe and we wholeheartedly thank you for your unending support of our organisation.

## NEW DEVELOPMENTS

*Our new Manoyatri mental health project provides shelter and treatment to all, especially those that others turn away and are left to roam the streets, with a view to reuniting them with their families or providing them with support to live independently.*

*Grinding machines were distributed to women within our projects and communities providing them a means of independent income through home-based work.*

*We took over responsibility for a Community Health Care Center based in the center of Ahmednagar, previously managed by our CSR partner Schneider.*

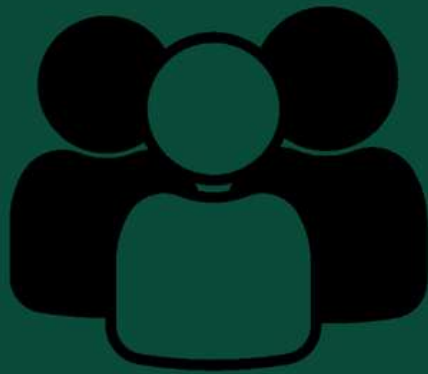
*Our new de-addiction center in Ahmednagar provides counselling and support for 30 days to help men and women break destructive habits.*







# COVID RESPONSE



**Over 10,000  
food parcels  
distributed**



**Free ambulance &  
medical support**

**Over 1 crore financial  
aid for 2,100 daily  
wage workers**



**24/7 emergency  
helplines for  
women & children**



**Over  
300,000  
people helped**



**5,400 migrant workers  
transported home**



**Home delivery of ART  
to HIV+ patients**



As the Corona virus spread across the world in 2020, Snehalaya took extreme measures to protect our thousands of beneficiaries. Despite a reduction in our services, many of our staff remained at work to provide support those who did not have homes or families they could safely return to. Our projects are home to children and women who have reduced immune systems and are therefore at a higher risk from opportunist infections and diseases such as Corona virus and we were very busy taking precautions to keep our them safe and sound by keeping COVID 19 at bay. Thanks to our measures there were no COVID cases in our shelter homes in 2020.

While our own beneficiaries remained our top priority, we were also aware that many others were being hit hard by the measures imposed to break the spread of the virus. We worked with the communities most affected by the lock down to ensure they stayed home and safe, took adequate hygiene measures, were able to access medical care and vital medicines when needed and that hunger did not become the biggest killer during the pandemic.

Throughout the year, our 305 employees worked 24/7 to provide a range of additional services helping 300,000 people with one or multiple services. This included food packets, grocery kits, shelter and food with survival kits and emergency relief to migrant workers.

We are extremely grateful for the help of organisations including Caring Friends, Crompton CSR, Wishing Well, Step Up Foundation, Shantikumar Firodia Foundation, Global Giving and Give India and the thousands of individual donors who helped us in our mission.





# MISSION RAHAT

From 11 May to 6 June 2020, a unique and serious issue surfaced when thousands of migrant workers and their families started from Mumbai and Pune for their native states as the continued lock down meant no work and no wages to support themselves. Fear of starvation, COVID infection and bleak future made these workers start the long journey home by foot, cycle, truck, tempo and any other available vehicle.

With everything closed along their route, by the time they reached us they were exhausted, hungry and dehydrated. Our roadside centers provided:

- Drinking water
- Cooked meals
- Dry snack packets & food parcels
- Medical support
- Hygiene & medical kits including masks, soap, sanitisers, band aids, paracetamol, electrolyte powder
- Reusable old clothes, hats/caps, old slippers & shoes
- Secure locker facilities where they could store their belongings for pick up later
- Bicycles, handcarts, prams & carts to carry excess luggage
- Copies of road maps, information and addresses of social organisations that could help them further along their route

Working with allied systems, stakeholders and supporters we were also able to provide additional support, including:

- Thermal screening and police permissions to travel
- Providing 5,400 people with transportation in our school buses & help in booking train accommodation and state transport buses to the Maharashtra border & private buses to states as far away as Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar & Bengal
- Our Childline & Snehadhar teams were on hand to check the status of all women and children travelling to prevent illegal trafficking
- Overnight accommodation for 2,380 people, including food & breakfast, thermal screening & documentation assistance, at a shelter provided by Ahmednagar Municipal Corporation

We were even able to end the journey for some of the travelers by finding work for some of them with Ahmednagar industrialists and entrepreneurs.

**40,000**  
**migrant workers**







## FOOD AID PROGRAM

From 21 March 2020, starvation became the biggest threat to daily wage workers and other people from low socio-economic backgrounds. Many hands came forward to offer support, including professionals, entrepreneurs, shopkeepers and people with local grocery businesses. Thanks to the support of them and our established donors, we were able to provide grocery kits, assembled by our Balbhavan and Yuva Nirman projects, to daily wage workers, slum dwellers, pensioners, widows, the disabled, female sex workers and transgender communities. These included enough basics for a 10,000 families of five for 10 days and additional vegetables, food packets, cooked rice with vegetables, sweets, sanitisers, masks and soaps to many more.

  
**3 lakh  
food  
parcels  
delivered**

## FINANCIAL AID

With daily wage workers confined to their homes, starvation became a real threat for slum community members, sex workers, transgender community, differently-abled people, Phase-Pardhi community members, people suffering from TB and/or living with HIV/AIDS.

With the support of Give India donors we were able to deliver additional food kits and also reach out to those hardest hit to distribute over Rs 1 crore of financial aid to 2,100 families. This provided them a vital lifeline until the end of lockdown when they could return to work.

While some of the beneficiaries used the funds to start small business like selling vegetables to create a sustainable income, many others paid it forward by sharing a portion of their payment with other families in need.

**Home delivery of  
ART to over 300 HIV+  
patients**

**88  
child marriages  
stopped**

**3,000  
FSW, TG & MSM  
helped**

**1,000  
students provided  
with online classes**

# HEALTH ON WHEELS

Snehalaya has been providing a range of free health services to marginalised sections of society for over three decades. In spite of the good availability of medical and surgical facilities in cities, large rural populations are still missing vital facilities in their home areas and it has always been challenging for us to reach them. Instead they have to travel large distances to the bigger towns and cities to receive basic healthcare. Hence we are always looking for new options to extend our reach beyond our established operations in Ahmednagar city and the surrounding talukas served by our Caring Friends Hospital & Research Center.

Thanks to a fully-equipped mobile medical van donated by SBI Mutual Fund, we now have an excellent opportunity to scale up our reach. This allows our hospital to organise health camps at harder-to-reach locations.

From January to March 2021, a separate outreach team of medical and paramedical staff appointed for our mobile outreach operated diagnostic health camps to identify and treat or refer patients for issues such as diabetes, hypertension, diseases of the oral cavity, ear-nose-throat, anemia, skin infections, arthritis and joint pain, ophthalmic problems, etc. With CSR support from Carrier Midea, we were able to treat more than 3,000 patients through 30 extra health camps.

When the second wave of the COVID pandemic started wreaking havoc in Ahmednagar District in March 2021, we were able to use the ambulance to spread awareness about COVID prevention, making isolation facilities available in our COVID care centers and also conduct antigen testing to identify positive cases in our local industrial and rural areas, reaching around 2,000 villagers.





# ON THE FRONTLINE

The plight of daily-wage and migrant workers such as labourers, transport and factory workers suffering due to the Lockdown from March 2020 was well documented across the world. What we heard less of within these groups was the hidden communities of female sex workers (FSWs), transgenders (TGs) and men having sex with men (MSM) who also had absolutely no means to earn a living. This included more than 3,000 sex workers-MSM-TGs registered with us, some of whom are also living with HIV.

A large part of the work of our Snehjyot project has been to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS and conduct regular STD testing and connecting those who test positive with anti-retroviral treatment (ART) and ensuring their whole wellbeing through regular follow up on their ART adherence and monitoring to keep other opportunistic infections at bay. The scale of the COVID pandemic forced all other government-based programs tackling health issues to take a back seat.

With lockdown restrictions in place, reaching out to these communities became a major challenge for our teams as our rural centers were forced to close. With our field and outreach work at a halt, there was a serious risk of losing touch with the entire community undoing decades of work to build trust and relationships among some of those at the highest risk from the virus.

Something needed to be done. Our Snehjyot team presented an official request to be considered frontline workers to our local government authorities and were granted the requisite permissions. As a result, they were able to deliver three month's supplies of life-saving ART medicines directly to over 300 people in their homes.

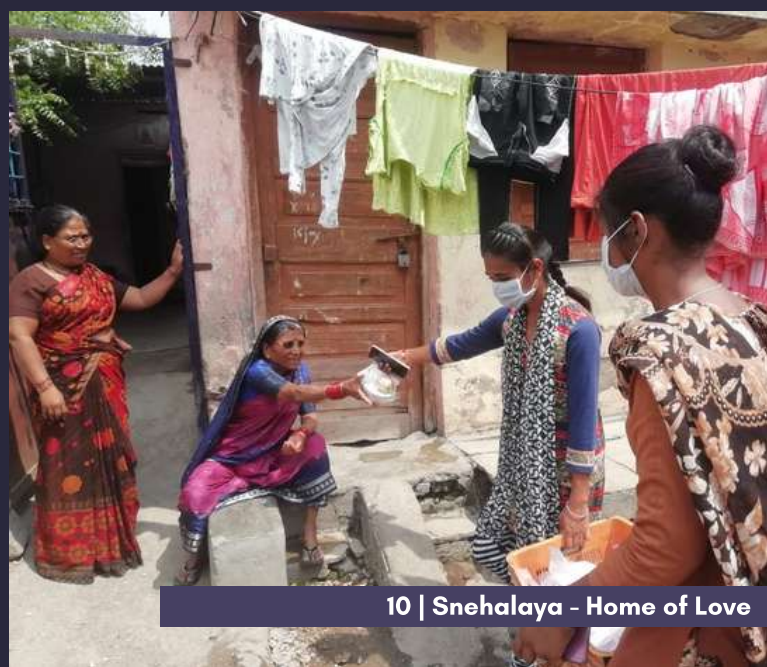
This was only the tip of the iceberg. With their work at a complete halt, how our FSW, TG and MSM beneficiaries were going to earn to buy their daily food

was a challenge. We were able to enroll 1,200 FSWs in government schemes to receive grocery kits for three consecutive months. With the help of organizations like I Love Nagar, Step Up Foundation, Crompton, Mukul-Madhav Foundation and many individual donors we were also able to provide grocery kits to nearly 800 TG, MSM and other sex workers who could not be enrolled in the government scheme.

After ensuring that they had food on their plates and medicines, our next challenge was to find them alternative and more sustainable means to survive.

Give India Foundation worked with us to provide monetary support to over 500 sex workers and MSM and their families. Another 1,000 were also able to benefit from the central government scheme set up specially to support COVID affected sex workers with around 400 of them with children attending schools receiving additional government funding.

There was an increased number of sex workers ready to leave the profession who approached us for support in starting small business like home-based flour milling, fruit, vegetable and bangle stalls and tailoring work. Our Snehjyot team placed themselves on the frontline without hesitation putting in tireless and dedicated efforts to ensure our FSW, TG and MSM communities survived the pandemic.



Let's Learn more...

$$8 \times 10 = 80$$

$$9 \times 10 = 90$$

$$10 \times 10 = 100$$

$$8 \times 9 = 72$$

$$9 \times 9 = 81$$

$$10 \times 9 = 90$$

$$9 \times 8 = 72$$

$$10 \times 8 = 80$$

$$9 \times 7 = 63$$

$$9 \times 6 = 54$$

$$9 \times 5 = 45$$

$$9 \times 4 = 36$$

$$10 \times 4 = 40$$



# A DECADE OF DEDICATION

This was a landmark year for our Snehalaya English Medium School (SEMS) as our first batch of students presented for their 10th Std exams. It was touch and go whether they would be able to sit for their SSC as the first wave of COVID was hitting our Indian shores. Fortunately, they sailed through their papers to do us proud! Many in the class have been with us since day one and awaiting their results was tense for all as it would be the first barometer of our performance as educators.

We needn't have worried as our bright and talented students brought in a 100% pass rate hoisting the school banner high. Each and every student scored well, with our top boy and girl achieving marks in the 80s, securing their passage to future success.

There was no time to rest on our laurels as lockdown meant schools were forced to close and, like everyone, our teachers and students had to quickly adapt to new styles of online learning. With children studying across two shelters and from home, we took the challenge in reaching them as an opportunity to train our staff in content development and ICT. They needed to embrace new techniques and become tech friendly. Daily training, after they had delivered their classes, focused on using online teaching platforms such as Google Meet, Zoom, Whatsapp, Google sheets and forms and YouTube while learning how to effectively share content using Powerpoint, MS office and more. This helped teachers develop their own content and they even started their own YouTube channel.

They were supported by virtual volunteers teaching students different topics which were not only on their syllabus but also helped ignite passions for subjects like English, science and mathematics.

We were relieved, and our students were overjoyed, when we were able to reopen school after a long five-month break. During lockdown, they had become detached from their academic life and limited personal contact with their peers and teachers was affecting their mental growth and learning. In November, making up for lost time, we were able to

inaugurate our new school library, a colourful and relaxing space where our children can enjoy many wonderful donated books. With over 5,000 titles to choose from, our children are discovering the joy of reading and have even started writing their own book reviews to recommend their favourites to others.

In February, our Snehalaya Kaushalya Vikas Kendra (SKVK) vocational training center opened. This adds to our school curriculum by teaching our students basic and sustainable skills to help open up different career opportunities to them. Multidisciplinary courses available with specialised trainers include a three-month beautician certificate course, basic electrical and carpentry skills. Among the ten students successfully completing our first beautician's course are two 18 year olds who are now working in a beauty parlor in Ahmednagar city.

Our new Teen Pathway Program is another opportunity for our final year, 10th Std, students to have a taste of their chosen career paths. At the start of the year we ask them their dream job and then work with them to secure a work experience placement which will give them hands-on experience and insights into their choices. This is all supplemented with discussions and guidance on the required skills, experience and qualities they need and how to write a resume and application letter and give the perfect interview. We don't simply want to guide our students on what they should do but to actually walk with them until they are clear on their future path.







# RESHAPING THE CURRICULUM

For the last 16 years, our Balbhavan project has been working in seven slum centers (seva vasti) in Ahmednagar to improve the living standards of children through education and overcome the problems of out-of-school children, child laborers, child beggars, child marriage, addictions and crime.

We have seen great success, preparing our own curriculum and providing after-school lessons which has resulted in all children living in the areas where we operate enrolled in local schools and colleges.

When the lockdown closed these schools and colleges, slum dwellers, who had moved to the city to find daily work to feed their families, suddenly had no means to fill their stomachs and education became a low priority. Our Balbhavan teams, who live in the communities where they work, joined our Mission Rahat, providing cooked meals and food and hygiene kits to those in the slums. Having dealt with the immediate crisis, their focus turned to how to continue their students' education.

Was it even possible to continue with teaching children in slum areas where most don't have space to study and many don't even have a four-walled house? Living in their tiny houses and surviving on two meals a day, where would the computers and mobile phones required for online teaching come from?

*Hema lives in Siddharthnagar, mainly known for its fights, gambling dens, and liquor sales, and has been attending our Balbhavan for the last seven years. Her father is a laborer, her mother is a housemaid and her brother also works to help his family. Despite being brought up in an impoverished family, Hema has shone as a brilliant and talented student, enthusiastically participating in every school and Balbhavan activity. This year, she passed her 12 std with excellent marks of 83%. This helped her gain admission for ANM to study nursing. The course fees are well beyond the family's reach but thanks to our generous supporters we have been able to sponsor her education and she is on track to fulfil her dreams and ultimately uplift her family's financial and social status.*

Their parents were either busy at whatever work they could find or are illiterate and unable to teach their children. The question of how we could deliver regular lessons in seven different slums with all their different problems created many challenges.

While the pandemic created unprecedented obstacles, dealing with crisis is second-nature to our team and they were determined to keep educating. Their solution was to start 'home education' for all of our 700 students. Working from house to house in each seva vasti, they formed groups of five younger children who would meet each day to study together under the guidance of an older student mentored by our teachers. Working with their schools, we were able to provide 9th to 12th standard children with their books and daily homework to ensure no interruption in their studies.

To support them, our teachers also had to embrace online technology and regular teacher training was conducted through Zoom, usually via mobile phones. They rose to the challenge becoming competent in many new and different methods of teaching. With extra-curricular activities playing a big role in engaging with our children, they also developed daily routines to keep them active. This included Toybank games, and activities including dances, songs, stories, debates, essays and interviews, in small groups within our teacher's own homes or via mobiles. Through this our children were kept busy learning new things that helped with their mental and physical wellbeing and development.

By continuing our daily interactions with children we were also able to monitor their health which helped us contain and overcome the spread of COVID. While the country was fighting against the pandemic, we are proud our students not only contributed to the battle but also remained focused on their studies to ensure that their education was not disrupted. This determination will help these children to reach their peak potential in the future. For the activists of Balbhavan, who work so hard to develop and support these children, this was their greatest victory to date.





# CARRY ON REGARDLESS

When the first wave of the COVID pandemic hit Ahmednagar, our District Collector ordered the immediate closure of all businesses, hotels, shops... everything was closed down, including schools and colleges. For Snehalaya it was essential to protect our vulnerable women and children and we enforced a strict no-one in, no-one out policy, forcing us to operate with a skeleton staff made up of those living in our Rehab Center. Although small, they were mighty and there was a great sense of camaraderie between everyone, with all rising to the challenges thrown at us on a daily basis.

The first challenge was what to do with 250 children who needed to be fed, educated and entertained? Each day would begin with a morning staff briefing to address any issues and plan the day's activities. Zoom meetings were a little known commodity before lockdown but like the rest of the world we soon came to learn what a great tool it is for linking up with people, especially when it came to delivering education to our kids. Many volunteers stepped forward to not only deliver quality education but also entertain through dance classes and health advice on COVID prevention.

Our Peer Mentors are a group of hand-picked older children who possess skills in listening, giving advice and taking action to address kids issues. To keep their friends busy, they organized events and activities including presentations on child rights, quizzes and dramas. In a fun but powerful way, they got the message home exactly where an individual stood as far as their rights, embedded in the India constitution, are concerned.

*Who remembers their first Lego? The kids were introduced to huge box of it, kindly donated by a young lad from the UK.*

*They soon created breathtaking constructions such as airplanes, boats, trucks, UFOs, providing hours of fun. There were no limits to their imagination and a favorite was a hotel with a swimming pool on the roof, with rockets in a garage to keep away unwanted guests. Building on their creativity, a special lockdown exhibition displayed the very best in our kid's art, craft and writing skills.*

They also organized an evening to say thanks and recognize the extra hard work our caregivers were doing. The tables were turned as it was the caregivers turn to be waited on in a decorated hall with a delicious dinner and a great evening of fun, music, dance and a well-earned break from COVID stresses.

When the pandemic took hold, it became clear that hospitals were being overwhelmed and there was a severe lack of beds, staff and facilities to cope with it. Our hospital was given over exclusively to the care of COVID patients, treating around 70 patients a day. We continued to operate a medical service to our beneficiaries and converted some of our guesthouses into fully functional medical facilities thanks to our amazing medical team who also did daily rounds to monitor staff and beneficiaries temperatures and oxygen levels, making sure there were no irregularities.

Our cook took the admirable step of temporarily leaving his family to take up residence in Snehalaya while his contract kitchen staff isolated at their own homes. But with 2,000 chapattis to be made and 400 people to feed every day how would he manage? Step in our amazing women and children. Each dormitory took it in turns to cook breakfast, lunch and dinner. And they did an incredible and tasty job. The kitchen's cleanliness is of high priority to Rekha, our kitchen manager, and she runs a tight ship and the kids maintained her high standards at all times.

For many it was their first time of working in a kitchen and they took to it like ducks to water. Two boys enjoyed it so much they have now gone into hotel management. With markets also forced to close down and farmers unable to sell their produce, we quickly and luckily became recipients of literally mountains of fruit and veg, which we distributed across our projects.

We are thankful and proud to boast that thanks to our dedicated staff and children, our Rehabilitation Center remained a green and COVID free zone throughout 2020.





# A LIFE FOR DREAMS

My name is Heena, I am 17-years old and came to Snehalaya when I was just six. I made friends quickly and immediately felt like I was part of this very big family. I especially enjoyed school. As I grew up, I began to excel in sports including badminton, kho kho and kabaddi.

I became quite competitive and loved the challenge of helping my teams to do our very best at local sporting events. If I thought the judges had made an unfair decision, I would not be afraid to tell them so. But it was dance that was always my passion, whether dancing solo or choreographing a group.

People would remark that I had a natural talent and my own unique style in expressing myself. I would always look forward to performing in Snehalaya or outside competitions, as it gave me the chance to do what I loved most. The more I danced the better I got and I came to realise that dance would be my vocation.

In April 2019, I noticed a small pain in my left leg and was taken to a doctor for treatment. Nothing was detected in X-rays and I carried on with school and dancing! Over the coming months the pain intensified and on a return visit to the hospital I was diagnosed with cancer of the bone in my leg. This was April 2020 and the first lockdown with travel restrictions that meant I couldn't get the treatment I so desperately needed.

I spent an agonizing few months waiting to be seen, I had never known pain like it. When I was eventually seen by specialists I was told that to stop the cancer from spreading I would have to have my leg amputated above the knee. Although this was a

daunting time, I wouldn't allow it to stop my studies and am proud to say that I was the highest scoring girl in 10 Std in our school.

On 5 October, 2021, my leg was finally amputated. There was a period of adjustment to my new life but I was lucky to have the incredible support of my beloved Snehalaya friends and family, who saw me through some of my darker hours. Local physiotherapist, Dr Judy Jose, also played a big part in my recuperation, helping build up my muscles and giving me the strength to face the challenges ahead.

This included another creative outlet and therapeutic activity with local freelance artist, Rutuja Lockhande. She introduced me to the ancient Indian Mandala art which I took to immediately and when my drawings were shared on social media, I received such a positive response I wanted to learn more. Over the coming months Rutuja played a big part in helping me develop my drawing skills through online classes and she is now supporting my application to art college.

I was shown videos of amputee dancers who were still dancing with or without a prosthetic. Watching them was very inspirational and gave me the determination to do the same. I started by attending the Zumba classes we have here which gave me the confidence to return to dance and choreography.

One year after the operation I was fitted with a prosthetic. I was so excited to be taking my first steps and although, I knew it would take a while to adjust, but like all the other challenges I have faced I am determined to succeed and for it to become part of me.

**“My passion for dance has never abated and I know I have astounded everyone with both my inner and outer strength as I continue to perform in my own unique style. No matter what the obstacles and challenges you may face... never give up on your life or dreams.”**





# SILENT VOWS

**“ I want to study further but our conditions can't support it. If COVID hadn't happened, my marriage would have taken place after I had completed my education, instead my family has saved a lot of money by arranging my marriage now. ”**

Regardless of gender, marriage before adulthood is a violation of human rights and as such is included in the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 5.3, which aims to eliminate the practice by 2030. Unfortunately, Ahmednagar had always been among the highest districts for incidences of child marriage, especially among farmers and low-income families, with girls usually aged between 11 and 17 marrying significantly older bridegrooms commonplace.

Since it was established in 2003, Snehalaya's Childline team has worked to stop this and regularly receives tip offs that a child marriage is being arranged. Our policy is to intervene within 20 to 60 minutes of receiving a phone call. In 2019-2020, the team received 29 such calls, often from the would-be brides. When the COVID lockdown started in March 2020, the number of suspected child marriage calls to our Ahmednagar team almost quadrupled with 110 calls between April 2020 and March 2021, resulting in a record-breaking 10 rescues conducted in one single day in December. This means Snehalaya is responsible for over 50% of the total 214 rescues recorded by the Ministry of Women & Child Development (WCD) in Maharashtra this year.

Even before the pandemic it was estimated that there were 1.5 million underage brides every year with 27% of girls marrying before they are 18 and 7% before they are 15. According to the UNICEF, almost half of all child brides worldwide live in South Asia, with one in three being from India. It is believed the numbers are just the tip of the iceberg, as numerous ceremonies are

held in secret or are unreported due to a loop holes such as the law not applying to underage engagements, many times we are told the ceremony is actually an engagement party and not a wedding.

During lockdown, the *Hindustan Times* reported that child marriages in Maharashtra surged by 78.3% as families 'reeled under poverty'. Save the Children estimated that the pandemic will globally put 2.5 million more girls at risk of early marriage by 2025. This is in part due to strict lockdown measures, which prohibited large gatherings, providing poverty-stricken families the opportunity to marry their daughters for a fraction of the usual expense. It wasn't all about money, some parents were genuinely scared of what would become of their children if they were to die from the virus and saw marriage as a way of protecting them. Add in law enforcement bodies such as the police being busy on COVID-19 and lockdown-related duties and it's easy to see why numbers rose.

Our Childline team had already ramped up their awareness programme from April 2020, with a renewed focus on social media. We also introduced a dedicated task force, Project Udaan, to tackle child marriages and involve adolescents as their own agents of change. It remains vital that we target the communities where the highest number of marriages happen and raise awareness of the laws and rights of children among community leaders and families. Once rescued we offer child brides counselling, shelter, legal and medical aid, education and vocational training skills. We are also able to help them and their families rebuild their lives with support from our other projects.



बदलत्या नगरचे लोकमाध्यम  
रेडिओ नगर 90.4 FM



आरंभ-वर्ष २०१०





# WAVES CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

**On 13 January 2021, our community radio station, Radio Nagar 90.4 FM celebrated 10 years of broadcasting.**

India's first Community Radio (CR) was started by Anna University in 2004 and NGOs, educational and agricultural institutions were granted permission to own and operate community radio stations in 2006. In 2011, our need to reach out to more beneficiaries, many of whom are illiterate, and provide them information about the society they are a part of and to give them an opportunity to voice their own views was met when Radio Nagar 90.4 FM hit the airwaves.

Community radio is expected to focus on developmental programming, however there is no explicit ban on entertainment and our station's primary focus is infotainment. Where others are more generalised in their approach, our programs are wrapped around our local connections in a way that every listener who can hear us feels like they belong to a community with shared interests and values.

Our in-house productions and on-air campaigns cover social issues such as women's health, rights and laws, female feticide, rights of sex workers, girl's education and environmental conservation. We also issue public announcements and awareness, such as COVID prevention and health messages, and have a reach of around 2,50,000.

We cater for all, covering current happenings in the city with on-ground and on-air events related to education, health, art, culture, festivals, spirituality, sports and exercise, literature, science and technology and much more.

Guests include experts and laymen, with a focus on successful women from different walks of life who

can inspire and motivate other women and young girls. Entrepreneurs, architects, scholars, thinkers, trekkers, social workers, actors, dancers, doctors, engineers, lawyers, sports persons, bikers, industrialists, educationists, journalists, politicians, novelists and poets are among those who have shared their stories and talents on Radio Nagar.

More importantly, we give our own beneficiaries, who include sex workers, abandoned and orphaned children, slum children and people living with HIV/AIDS air time, regularly joining local community representatives in sharing their stories and expressing their views and opinions.

We believe in investing in people and operating our own station has demystified technology to make radio careers accessible to the next generation of community jockeys, producers and programming heads. Many of our former staff are now successful RJs in leading commercial radio stations all over Maharashtra.

Mentored by experts such as Dr Gopal Mirikar, a well-known name in the All India Radio, they have learnt scripting, voice modulation, radio language and nomenclatures, technicalities, following the hour clock, etc, fueling new and exciting fields of creativity and communication.

The station has achieved so much in the past decade and is a vital channel for promoting our services and raising awareness of the inequalities that plague our society.



# IN KIND SUPPORT

There are so many ways you can support our work and beneficiaries and literally from day one, in-kind donations have helped build the organization you see today. From unwanted furniture which we have modified or repaired and kitchen utensils to used clothes, books, stationery, toys, groceries and leftover meals we are grateful for every donation that helps us save on our annual operating expenses.

## SECRET SANTA

Christmas is uniquely special for each of us as a time to enjoy receiving and giving gifts. Most of us can rely on a 'Secret Santa' who gifts us something special and exciting. However, children living in shelter homes are not always that fortunate and this year the risk of disappointing our children seemed high with the COVID pandemic and lockdown reducing donations.

Thanks to Wishing Well Foundation and Funschool, Christmas was saved with surprise gifts for all our shelter home, school, Balbhavan (slum project) and sister NGOs' children. These included children in tribal areas, children of sugarcane workers and those with special needs and disabilities including orphans living with HIV/AIDS. Over 700 gifts of colourful stacking toys, Playdough, snakes and ladders and Ludo games provided educational as well as fun activities - indeed a unique way to wish a joyful Christmas for all and help prevent the boredom of lockdown.



**If you would like to start a fundraiser or make an in-kind donation to provide essential supplies and treats to our women and children please get in touch, [info@snehalaya.org](mailto:info@snehalaya.org)**





This year's Diwali celebration was severely hampered by COVID, especially with so many families unable to work and without the spare cash to spend on their usual festival goodies. State Bank of India (SBI) is known as the bank for every Indian, committed to the economic empowerment of the poor and disadvantaged groups. Partnering with Snehalaya, Ahmednagar's Regional Manager of SBI, Mr Mahendra Mohite took the initiative of distributing 4,500 kits with Diwali sweets, soaps, perfumed oil, toiletries, combs, nail cutters and more to underprivileged and disabled children, sex workers, slum dwellers in Ahmednagar and Solapur, helping to spread the light of happiness to all during some dark days for us all.

## CARTS OF HAPPINESS

Like everyone else, when the COVID pandemic and lockdown closed down local businesses and suppliers we struggled to find the food and other essential supplies to provide for our 350 residential and thousands of other beneficiaries in need. We also had to close our doors to visitors who meant no in-kind donation deliveries. Thanks to Donate Kart, an online in-kind donation platform we were able to create a campaign to appeal for essential supplies. The innovative online store allowed us to create a 'shopping list' of the food and hygiene products we were running desperately short of. Donors were then able to purchase and dispatch them directly to our Rehab Center.

Over three months, 6,287 donors donated 31,422 products to our women and children with some incredible generous supporters donating over 100 products at a time. We are so grateful for the hygiene products and groceries including baby milk formula, dry fruits, jiggery and nuts, food rich in nutrients that helped build the strength of our beneficiaries and protect them against the Corona virus. The carts of happiness kept us fed and healthy but also brought so many smiles to the faces of our children and other residential beneficiaries and staff. We are sincerely grateful to Donatekart and all the donors who contributed to this unique campaign.

## BEST FOOT FORWARD

Our children love playing sports and thanks to Wishing Well Online Foundation and Tata Group's 'Better Soles Initiative' they are now doing it in style. An initial 199 pairs of excellent quality, colourful and attractive shoes were distributed to our younger children, followed by another 300 pairs for our older children during Diwali. They have all proudly been strutting their new footwear not only for sports but also special occasions and celebrations. Wishing Well Foundation has been a long-term supporter providing quality items and daily essentials and we are grateful to them and Tata Group for helping us provide a better and more enjoyable quality of life to all our beneficiaries.







# HAPPILY EVER AFTER

*Dhanashri is HIV+ and was orphaned when her parents died in a road accident. Her grandparents tried to care for her and her younger brother but were unable to provide education, medical treatment and the health care she needed. Our team offered her admission to Snehadhar to help her complete her education and access our health support. There was a tremendous positive change in her health and at her request, we started searching for a groom for her. We found the perfect match and she was married at our Rehab Center in 2016 and is really happy with her new life.*

In 1989, when Snehalaya was founded, HIV was spreading rapidly across India, particularly among sex workers. Those testing positive were thrown out of the brothels and left to die on the streets alongside their children. Snehalaya's 'Death with Dignity' program brought these women and children to our Rehab Center where we provided palliative care.

The children of these women were our first HIV+ beneficiaries and our primary objective was to provide them health care, regular medical testing and ART treatment. We became their parents providing safe shelter, education and more. As the girls matured our parental responsibilities included finding appropriate marriage matches, particularly for those who are HIV+. To help us find suitable partners, in 2015, we created our own matrimonial program with an event which provides girls and boys, our team and their families a chance to meet and decide if they are interested in marriage. This is followed by proper background checks, home visits and counselling and after we are satisfied with the family and the aspiring groom, the marriage is finalised and wedding preparations begin.

Our matched girls are married in a very special annual ceremony held each December with their 'family', including staff, trustees, patrons and volunteers of Snehalaya performing the traditional rituals. To date, we have performed 65 weddings of HIV positive couples, 18 of whom have conceived HIV negative children. A close follow up of the married couples is kept and each Diwali, they return 'home' to spend a day together with their families in their 'maternal' home.

In 2020, the Corona pandemic posed a challenge for our program with the fear of spreading the virus at large gatherings. Our team adapted and moved the match-making and preparation meetings online. We were able to manage socially-distanced home visits which allowed four of our girls to find their match and get married in a simple ceremony.

*Pallavi was first married in 2015 but her happiness was short-lived as she was soon tested HIV positive. Although her husband also tested positive, her in-laws were blaming her and making her life a misery. She felt suicidal but fortunately found her way to Snehalaya where she was given shelter, health and psychological support and education. She also got a job in our Smiile project where she was earning a good wage. Soon she was ready to give marriage another chance and she met her match in 2018 and is now living a very happy life with her new family.*

# ADOPTING CHANGE

The first wave of the COVID pandemic was one the most challenging periods in our Snehankur adoption center's history. As the news of a pandemic hitting major parts of the world dominated the headlines in the final weeks of February no one could anticipate what would happen just a fortnight later.

When, in early March, the first COVID positive patient was detected in Ahmednagar, our Snehankur team was put on high alert. Babies are one of the most vulnerable groups and we needed to start taking the utmost precautions, including a no visitor policy. Staff were monitored for fever, pulse and oxygen levels every day and sanitation of our premises was done twice a day. We also performed antigen tests of all employees with the help of the local government hospital.

When the full scale of the risk became apparent, our 26 caretakers and three nurses agreed to stay on the premises to cover two shifts of 12 hours. All new admissions were quarantined for 14 days and checked for symptoms before admission to our main nursery, requiring a separate team of caretakers, stretching our already limited resources. Added to this was the challenge of the 15-20% of babies requiring special care and treatment, including complicated surgeries and aftercare during a pandemic that was overwhelming medical facilities.

These included two children who tested positive for HIV and TB, two babies born with club feet, two premature babies and one baby girl with multiple anomalies who had to undergo an emergency surgery for Heamocoele (blood accumulation beneath skin layers which may or may not be connected to a major blood vessel) on her left chest and another baby with laryngomalacia (a condition of a hole between the wind pipe and food pipe).

With lockdown forcing people to stay at home in cramped conditions, violence increased and our

Rehab Center took in three minor mothers who had been brutally raped by their own relatives. We kept them safe and secure while we provided them with medical care and counselling.

With most adoption facilities in the state closed, we received an increased number of calls about abandoned babies from as far as Beed, Solapur and Nagpur. Whenever required, we sent our ambulance and team to bring these new admissions to our center. As the adoption process was completely suspended by CARA, all our babies, including those already allocated adoptive parents, were required to stay at our adoption center.

Within weeks, we were 20% over capacity and even after the adoption process resumed, parents were delaying travel for fear of COVID. To help smooth the process for those who could reach us, our team were managing and completing the procedures related to foster care within a day while parents stayed far away from our adoption center.

Regular training to maintain the health of our babies, caretakers, nursing staff and doctors became our topmost priority along with ensuring our vehicles were well maintained with all our equipment and the fuel tank ready to rescue babies, minor mothers and abandoned infants at any hour of the day and night.

We are incredibly grateful that all of our babies and mothers survived the year, thanks to our incredible staff team and our numerous medical volunteers and health professionals who, already overstretched with COVID, were always ready and willing to put in the extra hours to keep our babies safe and healthy.



**46**  
**adoptions completed**



# FINANCIALS

## Statement of Income & Expenditure Accounts For The Year Ended March 31, 2021

Income	Rs in Lakhs
Grants & Donations	1,027.46
International Sources	534.80
Bank Interest Received	118.14
Misc Receipts	17.69
Expenditure over income (Deficit)	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,698.08</b>

Expenditure	Rs in Lakhs
Food, Grains & Vegetables	64.99
Education & Skill Development	27.72
Health & Medicines	56.08
Livelihood	9.03
Program & Social Activities	96.94
Salaries & Honorarium	250.93
Farming	3.08
Other Expenses on the Object of the Trust	99.74
Repairs & Maintenance (buildings, electrical & vehicles)	34.11
Establishment Expenses	28.62
Rent	11.14
Insurance	3.66
Audit Fees	0.001
Depreciation on Assets	168.68
Excess of Income over Expenses (Surplus)	846.44

<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>1,698.08</b>
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For deposits being made in ₹ INR. All deposits qualify for 80G tax exemption.

**Bank Name :** HDFC  
**Branch :** Ahmednagar, Ambar Plaza Building - A, Opposite Old S T Stand, Station Road, Ahmednagar, Maharashtra 414001  
**Name of Charity :** Snehalaya  
**Account Number :** 01811000053339 - Savings  
**IFSC code :** HDFC0000181  
**MICR number :** 414240001

For deposits being made in foreign currencies as per FCRA regulations.

**Bank Name:** State Bank of India  
**Name of Charity :** Snehalaya  
**Account Number :** 40153553940 - Savings  
**SWIFT code:** SBININBB104

## Balance Sheet as at March 31, 2021

Liabilities	Rs in Lakhs
Trust Fund or Corpus	595.02
Ear Marked Trust Fund	2,488.88
Depreciation Fund	111.85
Loans	0.05
Other Current Liabilities	0.46
Provisions	25.59
Rent Deposit	1.00
Income & Expenditure A/c	1,122.87
<b>Total (deficit/surplus)</b>	<b>4,345.73</b>

Assets	Rs in Lakhs
Fixed Assets	1,804.55
Fixed deposits - banks & other Investments	2,133.39
Other Deposits	8.77
Current Assets, Loans and Advances	4.30
Stock in hand	1.81
Accrued Interest on fixed deposit	231.88
TDS	30.96
TCS	0.21
Tax paid against Income Tax appeal	6.45
Rent Receivable	
Grant Receivable	37.35
Other Current Assets	-
Cash & Bank Balances	86.07

<b>Total</b>	<b>4,345.73</b>
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Detailed Statement of Accounts is available on request

### Auditors

#### ABHAY BHANDARI CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

Pooja Complex, Chandani Chowk, Opp.  
Ahmednagar College, Ahmednagar - 414 001.  
Maharashtra, India  
Tel: 0421- 2342956, 2342960

# CREDIBILITY ALLIANCE NORMS COMPLIANCE

## Governing Body

Executive Committee & Annual Gross  
Remuneration Paid

S. No	Name	Designation
1	Sanjay Gugle	Chair
2	Arun Sheth	Vice-Chair
3	Kaustubh Amte	Vice-Chair
4	Rajiv Singh	Vice-Chair
5	Rajiv Gujar	Secretary
6	Meera Kshirsagar	Asst Secretary
7	Suhas Ghule	Asst Secretary
8	Jaykumar Munot	Treasurer
9	Jaya Jogdand	Trustee
10	Beharam Nagarwala	Trustee
11	Shashikant Satbhai	Trustee
12	Sangita Shelar	Trustee
13	Firoz Tambatkar	Trustee

No travel reimbursements were made to Board  
Members to attend Board Meetings.

Monthly Salary plus benefits paid to staff	Male	Female	Total
<5,000	44	70	114
5,000 to 10,000	54	97	151
10,000 to 25,000	42	21	63
25,000 to 50,000	1	-	1
50,000 to 100,000	-	-	-
over 100,000	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>329</b>

**Total cost of international travel by staff -Nil**

**Annual remuneration of two highest paid employees:**

- Rs 456,000/- Senior Assistant Director
- Rs 260,400/- Project Manager

**Remuneration of Lowest paid Staff members:**

- Rs 24,000/- Watchman

## Staff details as on March 31, 2021

Gender	Paid Full Time	Paid Part Time	Paid Consultants	Total
Male	128	10	-	138
Female	151	40	-	191

## Identity

Snehalaya is a voluntary organisation registered in 1991 under the Societies Registration Act 1960 (Reg No MH2220/A'nagar) and in 1995 under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) Reg No 083720087.

Snehalaya is registered with the Income Tax department under 12A Nsk/Tech/12A(a)93/1993-94 of the Income Tax Act 1961 All contributions to Snehalaya are exempt under Section 80(G) of the Income Tax No CIT(E)/12A(a)/80G/135/2008-09/1916) of the Income Tax Act 1961.

Income Tax Permanent No: AAETS3394M. 80G certification: AAETS3394MF20214. 12A certification: AAETS3394ME20214.

Snehalaya has received Accreditation from Credibility Alliance (CA/82/2013), a consortium mandated to audit NGOs, for the standard of good governance organisation & transparency.

Snehalaya has Gold Seal of Transparency from Guidestar India, Three-Star Rating with Give India and is a Top-Ranked Organisation with Global Giving.



**CREDIBILITY  
ALLIANCE**





# THANK YOU!

Thank you to all of our supporters, we wouldn't exist without you. From the single person donating a small cash sum, the fundraisers running events and those sharing our news through social media to those giving in-kind donations of clothing or meals to celebrate a birthday or remember a loved one, we appreciate and thank every last one of you. It would be impossible to list you all, but we know who you are and we hope you realise that every contribution you make, no matter how big or small, is making a positive difference to our beneficiaries' lives. We would also like to thank some of our funding and corporate partners who not only provide financial support to realise our ambitions but also offer us the guidance and reassurance that keeps us motivated, sustainable and successful.





# Please visit us!

Snehalaya, 239 F Block, MIDC, Ahmednagar, Maharashtra 414111, India

Tel: 0241 2778353, 9970982505, email: [info@snehalaya.org](mailto:info@snehalaya.org)

Find out more about our life-changing work at [www.snehalaya.org](http://www.snehalaya.org). Follow us and share the love:



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