



ANNUAL REPORT

2020 -2021

VIDYA VARDHINI FOUNDATION TRUST



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VIDYA VARDHINI FOUNDATION TRUST

Trustees:

Dr. ShubhadaGandbhir(Pathologist)

Dr. VishalamMani(Medical Practitioner)

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Dr. Srilatha Juvva(Professor Tata Institute of

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Hon. Director:

Mrs. Chitra R. Lakshman

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c/o

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Bankers to the Trust:

The Saraswat Co-operative Bank

Auditors:

Mr. V. Rajwade& Co.

FOREWORD:

The year 2020 -2021 at Vidya Vardhini Foundation Trust was different owing to the Pandemic but we continued with our ongoing Projects and activities in the best possible way we could. The Pandemic definitely slowed down our work but we remained connected with our clients, their families through our community volunteers and the social media.

During the peak of the Pandemic we lost our Founder Trustee Mr. Sudhir Gandbhir on October 2nd 2020 after fighting a brief illness. He was the inspiration in setting up Vidya Vardhini Foundation Trust with a group of like minded friends . He was very involved in all the activities and lent support to the causes that the Trust was engaged in. We offer our deepest gratitude to all his valuable contribution since the inception of the Trust.

With regard to Special Education during the Pandemic we were able to complete the National Institute of Open schooling (NIOS) examination with support from the siblings of our students and our teachers who guided the students to appear for the examinations online. It was a very significant learning for us that students could learn to write examinations online in a very short duration. Students who were enrolled in special schools had to suddenly stop their schooling and students with speech and hearing impairment suffered the most during these times. Students who were younger in age were unable to understand why the sudden lockdown was announced and they were unable to go to school.

Many of our young adults who ran small businesses were severely hit owing to the pandemic and had to face huge financial distress. We reached out support to all our clients and their families by distributing monthly ration in the first three months of COVID 19 and helping out few needy students with their fees. Monthly ration was distributed through our community staff.

The Director of the Organization also contributed in co-authoring a paper on "Psychosocial consequences of COVID-19 on people with visual impairment or low vision". This paper was published in early 2021 in the Journal Disability and Global South – DGS 2021 Vol.8 No.1.

1.Academic achievements of students with Special Needs:

With sudden and complete lockdown announced as the pandemic COVID 19 hit the country the schools were closed with immediate effect from March 23rd 2020 it had a huge impact on our students with special needs. Students had to sit at home and those who were in mainstream schools were able to appear for examinations online and successfully cleared their examinations.

Three of our students (two sisters with low vision; one girl with cerebral palsy) completed their Standard XI and enrolled for Standard XII in the colleges they were already studying. Other students studying in special schools completed their academic year in April 2020 and from June 2020 they had online classes for few hours every day. For students with speech and hearing impairment and visual impairment it was important that a family member be present throughout the duration of the class and help out in home work and other project work. Students with intellectual impairment were unable to pursue online classes and parents had to keep their wards busy throughout the day.

The students appearing for National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) were able to write their examinations successfully. The collaborative partner NGO PRATAHM was able to guide the students, teachers and the siblings of students to earn the online mode . The six students were able to write the B Level examinations successfully and join Standard X . The five students who had enrolled for Standard X under NIOS were declared successful based on the Projects submitted and internal assessment.

We supported one of the young adults with severe lower limb disability with electronic item for his shop as he was facing severe financial difficulty during the pandemic to buy items for his shop. y

One of our clients with locomotor impairment received a specially designer scooter from the locally elected representative as part of his support towards persons with disability. This has helped the person to grow his small Idli business and reach out to many more people in the community and earn additional income.

2.SAMATA :TheCommunity Mental Health Project –

The Community Mental Health Project initiated in August 2018 was running very smoothly until the pandemic happened from March 23rd 2020 and temporarily put a halt to our community clinic. The doctor in the initial months was also assigned COVID responsibility at the LTMG Hospital and therefore we decided to have tele - consultancy with the doctor and the patients were able to talk to the doctor and report their progress and doctor would then prescribe the medicines. The pharmacist then got permission from the police to visit the community and disburse medicines.

Within three months of the lockdown we had our clinic running online with all COVID protocols and the patients could connect with the doctor at scheduled time with help from our community staff . New patients were able to visit LTMG Hospital for the first time and then for follow up have tele-consultancy with the doctor like other

Since January 2021 we have been having regular clinic with the doctor coming to the community and providing diagnostic support. The pharmacist has also been visiting the same day as the clinic to give medicines and counselling support is also being provided not only on the clinic day but throughout the month by way of home visits, interaction with clients and family members and other committed members of the community.

We reached out to **48 people** during the year who have been regular in seeking support from this Project and have been showing good recovery. The recovery in mental illness takes a long time and even marginal improvement in their behavior, self care, self discipline sets a good motivation for the person and his family to continue with the treatment . Many youngsters who were on substance abuse were not regular and showed dropouts. This was owing to the severity of the problem, the company of friends they were in and had no education or jobs to pursue. It was difficult to bring them to the clinic during the day as they would be sleeping after consumption of drugs the previous night. Parents found it very hard to manage these youngsters and we are now working towards starting a Substance Abuse Group and the Alcoholic Anonymous Group to rehabilitate the youngsters.

3. Community Vision Centre:

The Vision Centre in partnership with KBHB Hospital Parel running for the past eleven years had to be closed owing to the pandemic and the complete lockdown. From July onwards it was once again restarted but the number of patients reduced and surgeries at the Hospital were less owing to travel restrictions and less staff at KBHB Hospital. From February 2021 the flow of patients increased and surgeries at the Hospital returned to normal and the Project has resumed its regular course following all COVID protocols. An average number of patients per week are around 45 requiring support towards spectacles, cataract surgery, and low vision or with any other vision problem. We are able to identify children with low vision through this Project and give appropriate help of special schooling or corrective surgery or any other help that is needed.

4. Other community Projects:

i) *Support during COVID-19 :*

We offered support by way of ration to all our clients with disability and mental illness through our community staff .

ii) We supported 10 students towards their fees of Sir Sayyed School both from primary and high school and as referred by the School Headmistress. The students were from very poor families where the fathers were daily wage earners and had no source of income.



Support to Esaki Pandian with a specially designed scooter



Support during COVID times



Community clinic in progress



Counselling and volunteer meeting



Vision Centre in progress



Students from the NIOS classes
