

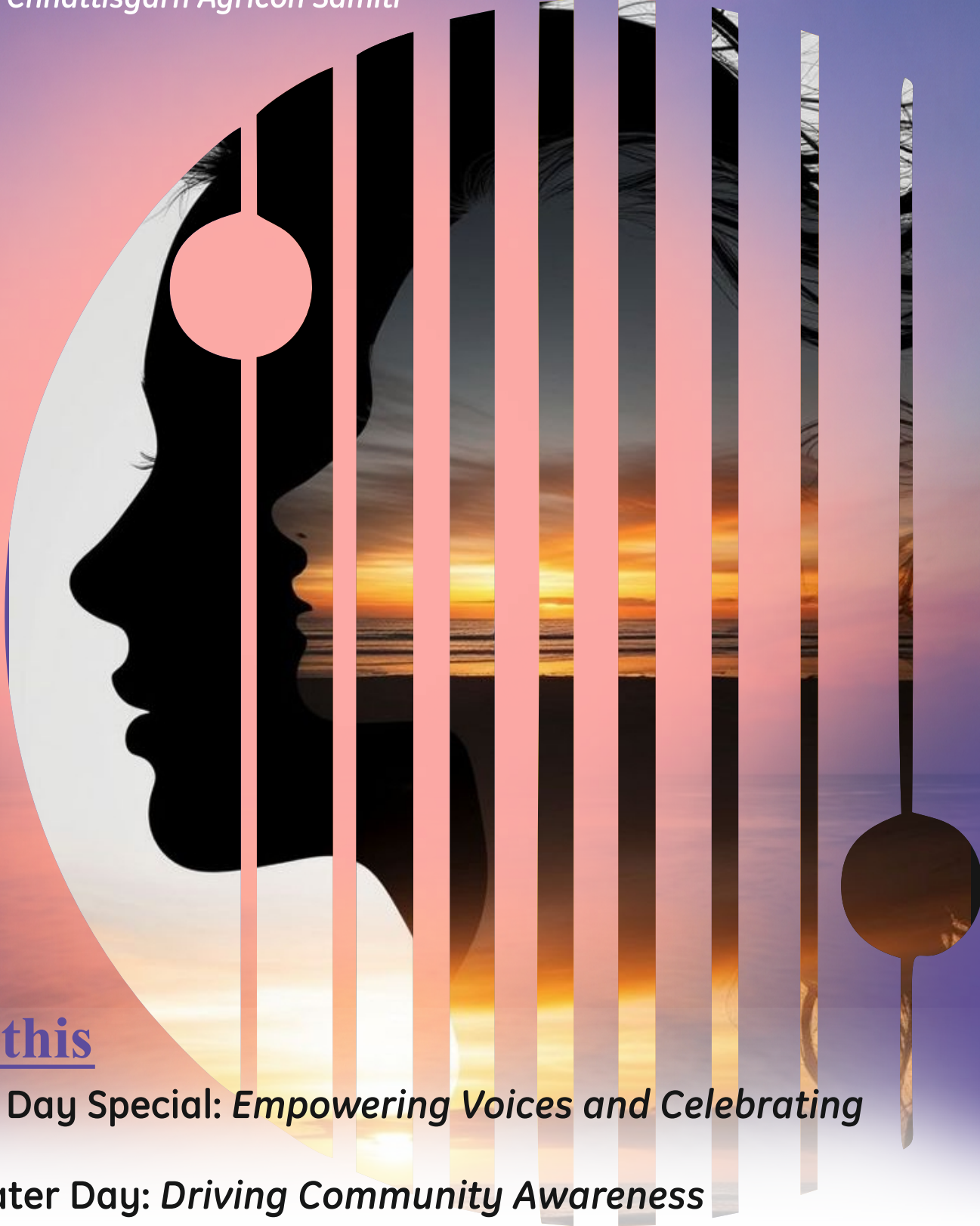
Volume 18 | January – March 2026

Quarterly Newsletter

By Chhattisgarh Agricon Samiti



# S A N K A L P



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Women's Day Special: *Empowering Voices and Celebrating Strength*

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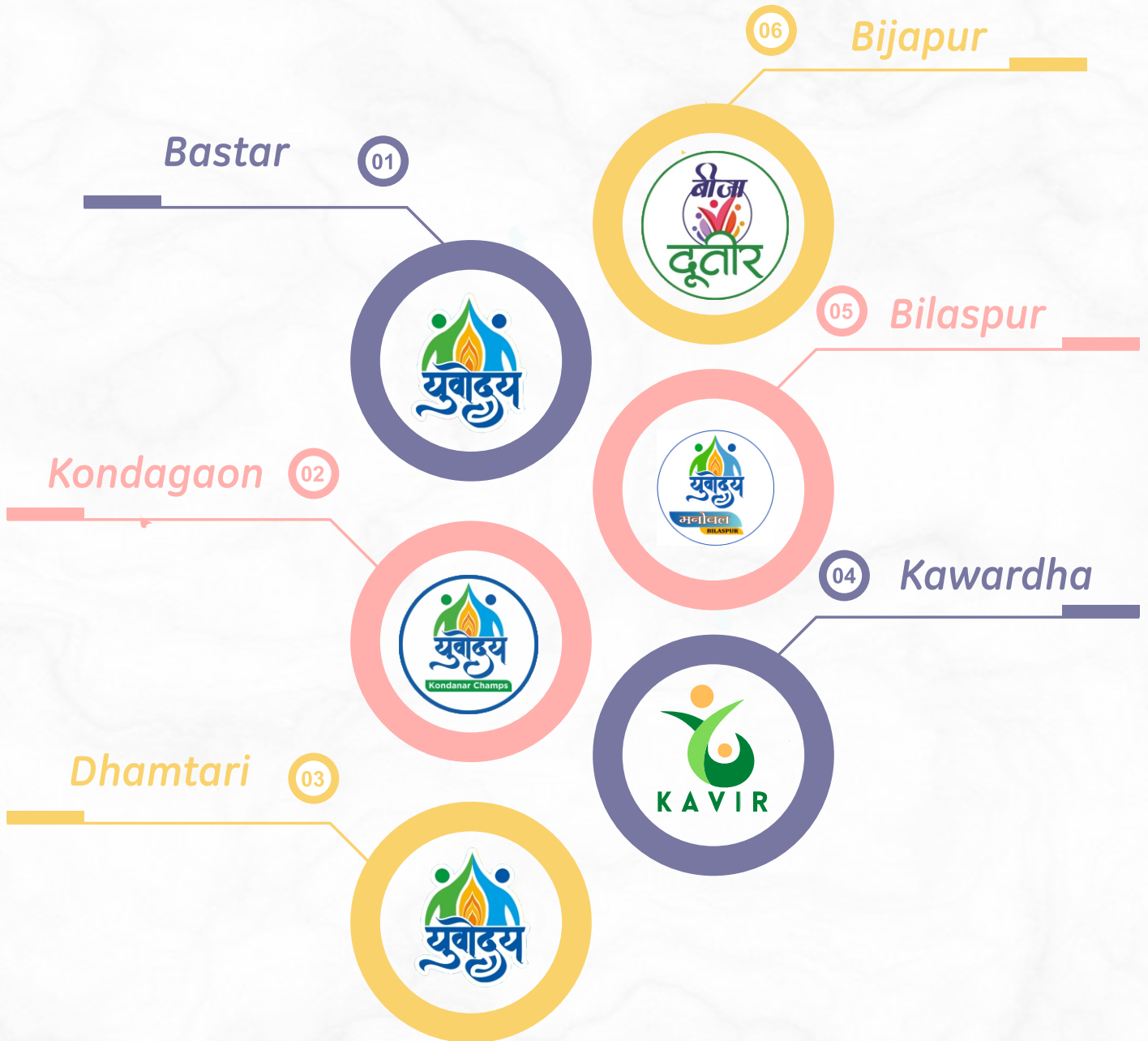
COMMONLAND

नारी शक्ति को नमन  
अंतर्राष्ट्रीय महिला दिवस  
नी हादिक एवं



# Project Coverage: Districts under Mental Health Initiative

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## Field Visit on Child Protection and Mental Health



On 8 January 2026, UNICEF representatives Chetna Desai and Vijayalakshmi Arora (Child Protection Specialist) visited Bilaspur to assess community-level child protection and mental health initiatives.

During the visit, they interacted with Yuvoday volunteers to understand grassroots implementation, coordination mechanisms, and the role of multi-tier platforms—Village Level Club (VLC), Cluster Level Club (CLC), Block Level Club (BLC), and District Level Club (DLC) in identifying and addressing local issues. Interactions were also held at Anganwadi centres with frontline workers, pregnant and lactating women, focusing on mental health, nutrition, and overall well-being. Around 50 community members participated, reflecting strong local engagement.



A community meeting further demonstrated awareness efforts through participatory approaches such as street plays and cultural activities, highlighting active community involvement.

The visit validated the effectiveness of structured multi-level planning and strong community engagement in addressing

child protection and mental health concerns. The efforts were highly appreciated by the UNICEF team.

## From Awareness to Action: How Bijaduteer Volunteers Are Driving Malaria-Free Bijapur

Rooted in the power of local women, a district-led malaria awareness campaign was spearheaded by 225 Bijaduteer volunteers — community women who are the first line of outreach in their own neighbourhoods. Implemented across 45 gram panchayats in Bhairamgarh, Bhopalpatanam, and Bijapur blocks, these volunteers went door-to-door, ran campaigns in local languages, and coordinated with the Health Department to promote early detection, timely treatment, and mosquito net usage.

Their dedication resulted in increased community awareness, improved preventive practices, and a noticeable reduction in malaria cases — a testament to what trained, motivated local women can achieve when trusted with real responsibility.

### मेगाफोन से गुंजा जागरूकता संदेश: मिरतुर साप्ताहिक बाजार में बीजादूतीर स्वयंसेवकों का मलेरिया रोकथाम अभियान



**बीजापुर (प्रखर)।** विकासखंड भैरमगढ़ के ग्राम मिरतुर साप्ताहिक बाजार में बीजादूतीर स्वयंसेवकों द्वारा मेगाफोन से जागरूकता एवं व्यवहार परिवर्तन को लेकर विशेष अभियान चलाया गया। इस दौरान स्वयंसेवकों ने मेगाफोन के माध्यम से ग्रामीणों को मलेरिया से बचाव के उपायों के बारे में विस्तार से जानकारी दी। स्वयंसेवकों ने स्थानीय इल्को एवं गोंडी भाषा का उपयोग करते हुए सरल और प्रभावी तरीके से संदेश पहुंचाया, जिससे ग्रामीणों में बेहतर समझ विकसित हुई और वे अधिक जागरूक बने। अभियान के दौरान लोगों को मच्छरदानी के निर्माण उपयोग, आसपास साफ-सफाई बनाए रखने, ठंडे हुए पानी को हटाने तथा समय पर जांच एवं उपचार कराने के लिए प्रेरित किया गया। इस पहल से साप्ताहिक बाजार में उपस्थित ग्रामीणों ने उत्साहपूर्वक भाग लिया और मलेरिया रोकथाम के प्रति सकरात्मक व्यवहार अपनाने का संकल्प लिया।

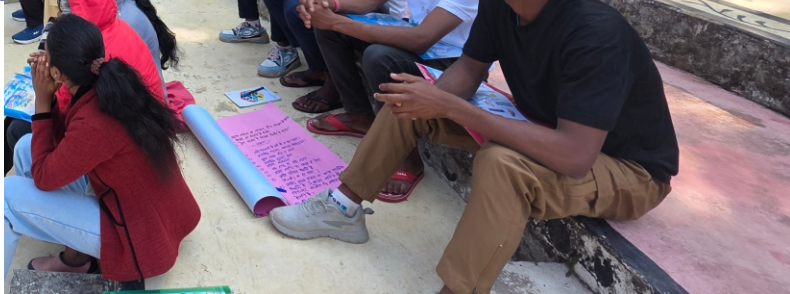
## Strengthening Community Mental Health Systems: Mann Mitra Training Highlights



At BADAL, Jagdalpur, 60 volunteers came together for a five-day intensive training on mental health and community support. Many participants were from Bhopalpatanam in Bijapur district—a remote, tribal region bordering Telangana and Maharashtra, where access to mental health services is limited and such conversations are rare. Their participation itself reflects a meaningful shift toward openness and awareness.

The training equipped them to act as local mental health champions. Through simple, practical approaches like Look, Listen, Link, along with tools such as SRQ and QOL, volunteers learned to identify needs and connect people to appropriate support. Creative methods like songs and posters helped make these ideas relatable, while self-care remained a key focus.

Now back in their communities, these volunteers are strengthening mental health support from within—ensuring care reaches even the most remote areas, led by the community itself.



## Republic Day: Empowerment and Grassroots Recognition



In Bijapur, 16 Bijaduteer volunteers were recognized for their sustained work across education, health, and nutrition—areas that directly shape everyday life in their communities. These were not symbolic contributions but consistent, on-ground efforts: supporting children's learning, facilitating access to basic health services, and strengthening awareness around nutrition. The recognition brought visibility to work that often goes unnoticed, reinforcing the idea that meaningful change in such regions is being driven from within the community itself.

The event went beyond a formal ceremony—it became a space where people felt acknowledged and connected to a larger purpose. In a context where opportunities for public recognition are limited, this moment of collective pride mattered. It created a sense of ownership and motivation, not just among those recognized but also among others present, signaling that community-led efforts are valued and worth continuing.

## Driving Accountability and Action: Leadership Review Strengthens Beejadootir Efforts

On 2 February 2026, District Collector Shri Sambit Mishra and Zila Panchayat CEO Ms. Namrata Chaube convened a progress review with Bijaduteer volunteers, where CLC and BLC leaders presented key community initiatives from the past two months. The review reflected a strong culture of accountability and community ownership at the district level.

District Coordinator Shri Ashok Pandey shared updates on Yuvoday app reporting, malaria awareness, child protection, mental health, and SMC meetings.

The Collector appreciated the work being done and directed attention toward completing housing schemes and re-enrolling school dropout children. An exposure visit for volunteers was also approved to further strengthen their field knowledge and learning.



## Hum Honge Kaamyab: Strengthening Student Well-being & Exam Readiness



The Hum Honge Kaamyab campaign supported students across Bilaspur and Kondagaon in managing exam stress and improving preparedness. Beyond structured sessions, children also reached out directly through IVR calls — sharing their anxieties, exam difficulties, and personal challenges in conversation with programme advisors, reflecting a genuine need for guided support during this critical period.

In Bilaspur, a district-level session on 11 February 2026 at the Collector Office — led by District Collector Mr. Sanjay Agrawal with UNICEF and CAS support — reached 8,371 students across 100 schools, including 700+ via YouTube Live. Sessions covered time management, answer-writing skills, peer pressure, and building a positive mindset, with dedicated school-based workshops for Classes 10 and 12.

In Kondagaon, the campaign covered 167 schools, reaching 11,224 students through continuous, activity-based engagement focused on stress management, confidence building, and relaxation techniques — creating a safe, supportive space for young learners.



## POCSO Awareness Across Districts: Komal Video Screening Initiative

Child protection awareness reached a new scale this quarter, with the Komal video screening initiative covering 215 schools across five districts — Bijapur, Bilaspur, Jagdalpur, Kabirdham, and Kondagaon — and directly reaching 7,875 students.

Before entering schools, 213 volunteers were trained on child protection concepts, key provisions of the POCSO Act, and age-appropriate facilitation — ensuring that every session was delivered with sensitivity and consistency. In schools, volunteers led sessions on safe and unsafe touch, reporting channels including Childline 1098, and how to use the POCSO complaint boxes installed at accessible, confidential locations within school premises.

The impact was visible. In Bilaspur, calls to Childline 1098 nearly doubled — rising from approximately 10–15 per month to 30–35 — and 7 cases were formally reported. In Kondagaon, 12 cases were registered, reflecting growing confidence among children and communities in using formal protection systems. Volunteers themselves noted that the training made them more prepared and more confident when discussing sensitive topics with children.

What these numbers reflect is not just reach — but a shift in awareness, in willingness to speak, and in trust that reporting matters.

District Child Protection Strengthening Initiative — Bilaspur On 13 February 2026, a field visit under the District Child Protection Strengthening Initiative brought together the DCPU office, a Government Higher Secondary School, and the Mahamand village cluster in Bilaspur — connecting the dots between policy, institutions, and community.

Sessions with SMC members, parents, teachers, and students focused on the POCSO Act, Childline 1098, safe school norms, and complaint mechanisms. VLC meetings reinforced community-led accountability, while role-plays and group discussions made the conversations grounded and participatory.

The outcome was tangible — stronger DCPU coordination, renewed SMC and VLC engagement, and clear commitments from schools and communities for continued monitoring and follow-through. "The visit bridged the gap between child protection policies and their practical implementation at the grassroots level."



## Strengthening Child Marriage Prevention Systems



In Chhattisgarh, targeted efforts to prevent child marriage were strengthened through coordinated trainings led by the Women and Child Development (WCD) Department on 14 February and 27 March 2026. These sessions brought together Panchayat Secretaries, police, education staff, Anganwadi workers, and other frontline functionaries—people who are often the first to identify risks at the community level.

The trainings focused on legal provisions, early identification of at-risk children, and the importance of timely reporting and inter-departmental coordination. Designed to be practical and action-oriented, they helped participants clearly understand their roles and respond more effectively. By building awareness, clarity, and coordination across systems, these efforts strengthened the foundation for early intervention and prevention of child marriage.

## Designing Inclusion: Human-Centered Workshop on Disability



A three-day Human-Centered Design (HCD) workshop was organised by UNICEF India in Bilaspur from 18–20 February, focusing on reducing stigma around disability and developing community-driven solutions.

The workshop brought together government officials, CSOs, frontline workers, teachers, and — critically — persons with disabilities themselves, to co-create practical solutions grounded in lived experience. The goal: to design systems that are truly inclusive, not just on paper.

Ideas that emerged — including peer support networks, therapy-based game centres, and AI-enabled support tools — showed the transformative potential of listening to those most affected. A field visit to Akaltara provided real-world grounding.

The training demonstrated that when people with disabilities are placed at the centre of the conversation, the solutions that emerge are more relevant, more sustainable, and more human.

## ***Strengthening the Continuum of Care: Coordinated Mental Health Action in Bilaspur and Bastar***

Across Bilaspur and Bastar, a focused effort brought together field teams, Mann Mitra volunteers, and district-level stakeholders to strengthen how mental health care is delivered and connected at every level. The objective was clear—move beyond isolated efforts and build a functional “circle of care,” where community outreach, case management, and institutional support work in alignment. Mann Mitras played a central role, not just supporting individuals but helping surface real challenges from the ground.

Discussions and joint reviews focused on active and closed cases to ensure continuity of care, improve follow-ups, and strengthen documentation. At the same time, engagement with systems such as DMHP, Anganwadi, and protection services helped clarify referral pathways for cases needing higher-level support. This combined approach highlighted gaps in coordination while also creating practical solutions—stronger linkages, clearer roles, and more consistent tracking. The outcome was not just better understanding, but a more connected system where community and institutions work together to provide sustained mental health support.



## ***Promoting Positive Parenting Through Street Play: Community Voices Driving Change***



In Bilaspur and Bijapur, volunteers used street plays as a powerful tool to spark conversations around positive parenting. In Bijapur, the initiative was led under the guidance of Sambit Mishra and Namrata Chaube, reinforcing institutional support for community-led engagement. Performed in community spaces like local markets, these plays turned everyday situations into relatable stories—helping families reflect on how their behavior shapes children’s growth.

The performances focused on simple but critical shifts: replacing scolding and comparison with communication, understanding, and emotional support. They also highlighted emerging concerns like excessive mobile phone use and its impact on children. The message was clear and practical—small changes in how parents interact with children can create a safer, more supportive environment. By using local language and familiar contexts, the initiative connected deeply with communities, making the message easier to accept and act upon.

## Building Minds, Building Change: Mental Health Training under MY Bharat Exposure Visit

On 12 March, as part of the MY Bharat Inter-State Exposure Visit, volunteers from Andhra Pradesh participated in a focused mental health training session in Bilaspur.

The session covered key topics such as understanding mental health, managing stress, recognizing emotional challenges, and building a positive mindset. Participants were also guided on empathetic communication and supporting mental well-being within their communities.

Through interactive methods like group discussions and role plays, the session saw active participation and engagement, making it a meaningful step toward strengthening youth capacity in mental health awareness.



## Community-Level Behaviour Change and Engagement Kondagaon District

During the quarter, mental health interventions adopted a participatory approach, reaching **468 individuals** through awareness sessions and engaging **168 adolescents** in life skills education. Positive parenting initiatives connected with over **450 parents**, while community outreach activities like nukkad natak reached around **300 individuals**, helping reduce stigma and improve understanding of mental health.

A mix of methods — community meetings, street plays, ratri chaupal, and Kyon Cards — enabled both wide outreach and meaningful engagement. Parents showed increased openness and willingness to adopt empathetic, communication-based practices.

Volunteer systems were strengthened through a three-tier structure (Block, Cluster, and Village levels). A total of **3 Block Level meetings** (36 volunteers) and **15 Cluster Level meetings** (98 volunteers) were conducted, ensuring better planning, coordination, and last-mile implementation.



## *Building Capacity for Bioregional Planning 3-Day Training at Bhanupratapur*



A three-day training programme was conducted at Bhanupratapur, organized by PRADAN, with participation from multiple organizations including Chhattisgarh Agricon Samiti and Bastar Sevak Mandal. The training focused on strengthening understanding of bioregionalism, sustainability principles, and practical planning approaches. Key sessions included introduction to the “Sense of the House” tool, interactive group exercises, and discussions on developing action plans using the basket of needs approach. Field visits to Neechetonka and Silibahar villages provided hands-on exposure to data collection and ongoing community initiatives. The final day emphasized data analysis and interpretation, followed by a collaborative discussion on implementation strategies. The programme

enhanced participants’ capacity for field application and fostered inter-organizational collaboration.

“The training translated theoretical concepts of bioregional planning into practical tools for on-ground implementation.”



## Advancing Indravati Sabri Landscape Restoration (ISLR) Implementation: Coalition Meeting Highlights.

A coalition meeting was held on 16 January 2026 at the PRADAN office, Jagdalpur, focusing on strengthening collaboration and planning upcoming activities. Key discussions included a review of ongoing progress, alignment on shared objectives, and coordination mechanisms between partner organizations. Plans for an inter-organization exposure visit involving Agricon, PRADAN, and Bastar Sevak Mandal were also discussed, along with tentative scheduling.



The meeting further emphasized initiating bio-region identification and conducting the “Sense of the House” survey to support data-driven planning. Clear action points were defined, including finalizing exposure visit dates, identifying a bio-region, and coordinating next steps for survey implementation.

The discussion reinforced inter-organizational coordination as a critical driver for effective and integrated landscape restoration efforts.

## Ground-Level Engagement for ISLR Community Interaction in Matkot Village

A field-level interaction was conducted on 02 February 2026 in Matkot village, Tokapal Block, Bastar, to strengthen engagement between the CAS team and the local community. The meeting brought together PRI members, farmers, and village youth to discuss key challenges related to declining natural resources, including forest degradation, water scarcity, and soil



fertility. Detailed discussions also covered the functioning of village institutions such as the Village Sala Samiti and Water Committee, along with gaps in basic services like healthcare. A focused dialogue with village youth highlighted concerns around lack of direction and opportunities, leading to initial discussions on potential pathways for skill development and engagement. The interaction resulted in improved awareness of ISLR objectives, stronger community connect, and a mutual agreement to conduct regular monthly meetings for planning and review. The visit reinforced that sustained community engagement is essential for translating landscape restoration plans into locally owned action.

## Driving Convergence and Strategic Planning: Indravati Sabri Landscape Restoration (ISLR) Review Session.

A two-day ISLR Project Review and Planning Session was held on 19–20 March 2026 in Bastar to assess progress and strengthen implementation strategies. The session focused on reviewing village-level activities, identifying gaps in community engagement, and improving team coordination. Field insights highlighted the effectiveness of door-to-door engagement in increasing participation.

Key challenges such as low volunteer involvement, accountability gaps, and resource utilization were discussed, along with solutions through structured planning and role clarity.

The session emphasized that strong coordination and data-driven planning are essential for effective project implementation.



## Strengthening Community Vision: GP Level Meetings



Gram Panchayat level meetings were conducted across Bastanar and Tokapal blocks to engage communities in planning and decision-making for their villages, with support from Commonland.



In Tokapal Block, meetings were held in Matkot, Mandwa, and Rajur, where around 300+ community members actively participated in discussions on local development issues and priorities. Similarly, in Bastanar Block, meetings were organized in Badekilepal, Silakhjodi, and Tirthum Gram Panchayats, with 300+ people participating in the GP-level meetings.



A key highlight of these meetings was the visioning activity, where villagers shared their ideas and aspirations for the future of their villages. Through this exercise, communities reflected on what they want their villages to look like in the coming years—better water access, improved livelihoods, and stronger infrastructure.

These meetings are not just discussions; they are a step toward building community ownership and aligning development efforts with the real needs and vision of the people.

## Community at the Core Azim Premji Foundation Outreach in Tirthum



Under the Azim Premji Foundation project, a community interaction programme was conducted on 17 January 2026 in Tirthum village, Bastanar Block, with active participation from PRI members, farmers, women, and youth.

The session adopted a participatory approach, including an economic survey to identify households for the SOTH assessment. Alongside this, awareness was created on safe drinking water practices and key objectives of the APF project. Community members were also encouraged to take leadership roles, with the identification of water champions to support and promote community-led water management.

The initiative contributed to strengthening community awareness, participation, and ownership, and fostering a foundation for sustainable natural resource management.

## Strengthening Planning and Community Engagement: Planning Meeting



An internal review and planning meeting was held on **03 February 2026** at the CAS Office, Jagdalpur, to assess progress and streamline upcoming activities. The discussion focused on reconducting GP-level meetings, standardizing daily reporting systems, and strengthening youth engagement as a key driver for community ownership. Plans for implementing water and sanitation structures, forming Village Procurement Committees, and integrating visioning exercises into GP meetings were finalized. The meeting also emphasized pre-trainings of youth and women to identify Water Champions and VWSC members, along with

awareness activities as wall paintings and school drawing competitions.

The meeting established clear action points and reinforced structured planning as essential for effective community-led implementation.

# Village Water Sanitation Committee (VWSC) Meeting for Water Awareness: Kodenaar

A **Village Water Sanitation Committee** meeting was held on 19 February 2026 in Gram Panchayat Kodenaar with active participation of male and female members. The session focused on awareness of safe drinking water, water quality, conservation, and the importance of community participation. Discussions on a 50 monthly contribution highlighted its role in sustainable water management. A consent agreement was also signed by the Sarpanch, Secretary, and VWSC members to support upcoming initiatives. The meeting strengthened community ownership towards safe and sustainable water management.



## Strengthening Water Access: A Step Forward in Kodenaar

In Kodenaar, efforts are actively underway to improve water access through the construction of community-based structures, aimed at ensuring safer and more reliable water availability for villagers. These initiatives focus on strengthening local water systems so that communities can access water more consistently and with reduced risk, contributing to improved daily living conditions. One key intervention is the development of jhiriya—small traditional water ponds used for drinking purposes. These structures are now being strengthened with cemented construction to protect the water from contamination and improve its safety for daily use. This shift is not just about building structures; it's about improving the quality of life. By making water sources cleaner and more secure, the community is moving towards better health and more sustainable water management.



## World Water Day: Driving Community Awareness and Action on Water Conservation



On the occasion of World Water Day (22 March 2026), awareness activities were conducted across Tokapal and Bastanar blocks, engaging children, youth, adolescents, and community members, with a total participation of 500+ individuals across both blocks. The initiative included awareness rallies, community sessions, and wall writings in public spaces to promote messages on water conservation, safe drinking water, and responsible usage. Drawing competitions were also organized in local schools, including themes like "Water Conservation and Gender," where children creatively expressed their understanding. These simple yet impactful, activity-based efforts encouraged practical daily actions, strengthened awareness, and fostered a sense of shared responsibility towards sustainable water conservation.



## District-Level Kisan Mela – Showcasing Sustainable Solutions



Our organization participated in the District-Level Kisan Mela held on 12 February 2026 at Taregaon Jangal, Kabirdham. The event served as a dynamic platform for farmers, experts, and institutions to exchange ideas on modern and sustainable agriculture.

A dedicated stall highlighted our work on bio-fertilizers, Integrated Farming Systems (IFS), carbon initiatives, and water-saving techniques like AWD. The stall drew significant attention, encouraging active interaction and knowledge sharing with farmers and officials.



A key moment was the visit of Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Sharma, who appreciated the focus on soil health and sustainable practices. Positive feedback from department officials further validated the impact of our field-level work. Overall, the mela boosted visibility of our initiatives and opened new avenues for collaboration.

## One-Day Workshop on Dry direct seeded rice (DSR & FPO Awareness)

On 17 March 2026 a one-day workshop on Modern Agriculture was organized by KAVIR Kisan in collaboration with CG Agricon Samiti (CAS) and Kisan Craft Limited, with participation from around 90 farmers, experts, BOD members, media representatives, and team members from Kawardha and Pandariya blocks.

Dr. Sumant Hola led a technical session on Dry Direct Seeded Rice (DSR), while Mr. Ravindra Agrawal shared insights on agricultural innovations and farmer support systems. Mr. Manas Banerjee conducted a session on Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), highlighting the importance of collective farming.

The workshop emphasized climate-resilient and water-efficient practices such as DSR and AWD, along with improving market access through FPOs. Interactive discussions and experience sharing made the session highly engaging.



## Women's Day Special: Empowering Voices and Celebrating Strength

As part of the Women's Day, a series of activities were organized across Kabirdham, culminating in the celebration of International Women's Day on 8 March 2026. These initiatives aimed to promote awareness, confidence, and empowerment among rural women through meaningful community engagement.

A key highlight was the screening of *Laapataa Ladies*, which sparked discussions on education, decision-making, and gender equality. Women actively shared their views, making the session interactive and encouraging open dialogue on important social issues.

Creative activities such as painting were conducted in villages including Khariya, Bhonda, and Bolda Kala, offering women and girls a platform to express their ideas and aspirations around empowerment. These sessions encouraged participation and helped amplify their voices within the community.

In Khairbana Kala, self-defense training sessions equipped women with practical safety skills while raising awareness about their rights. Overall, these efforts went beyond celebration, fostering confidence, strengthening awareness, and supporting women's empowerment at the grassroots level.



## Building Resilient Villages through Natural Resource Management (NRM)



During this quarter, the NRM initiative under the CHiRP program made significant progress in promoting sustainable land and water management through strong community participation and convergence with government schemes. The approach focused on addressing key challenges such as water scarcity, soil degradation, and livelihood gaps, with 3 cluster-level plans developed covering 16 villages.

Planning was carried out using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), where communities actively engaged in resource mapping, seasonal analysis, and problem identification. Field assessments and transect walks helped in understanding local landscapes and identifying suitable sites for interventions like water harvesting and soil conservation.

Based on these insights, key activities such as pond deepening, drainage line treatment, plantation, and soil-moisture conservation were implemented using a ridge-to-valley approach. Convergence with schemes like MGNREGA and PMKSY further strengthened the scale and effectiveness of these efforts.

As a result, improvements in water availability, soil health, and agricultural productivity are being observed. The initiative is steadily building resilient communities by combining local knowledge, scientific planning, and sustained on-ground action.



## Empowering Girls: Celebrating Balika Diwas Through Community Action



On 24 January 2026, Balika Diwas was observed across multiple villages with a strong focus on promoting girl's education and empowerment. Awareness activities were carried out to encourage communities to support girls in continuing their education and achieving their full potential.

Rallies in Khairbana Kala, interactive sessions in Khandasara led by Nitesh Chandel and Jeevan, and a street play in Taregaon effectively conveyed the importance of completing secondary education. Cultural activities such as rangoli and performances further enhanced community participation.

A self-defense training session was also organized, equipping girls with essential skills and confidence, making the initiative both impactful and empowering.

## Celebrating Learning and Tradition: Basant Panchami Observed with Community Spirit

On 24 January 2026, Basant Panchami was celebrated across villages with great enthusiasm, beautifully connecting the spirit of tradition with the importance of education. The occasion was used as an opportunity to reinforce the value of learning, especially among girls and young women.

The celebration witnessed active participation from girls and women through vibrant cultural activities such as dance performances, rangoli art, and creative expressions. These activities not only created an engaging and joyful environment but also encouraged confidence, creativity, and self-expression among participants.

Beyond celebration, the event fostered strong community bonding and served as a reminder of the cultural significance of knowledge and learning. It successfully highlighted how traditional festivals can be leveraged as powerful platforms to promote education and collective participation.



## Prerak-Led Improvements Building Effective Learning Environments



Prerak meetings were conducted on 24 March (Cluster 2) and 25 March (Cluster 1), focusing on addressing challenges, sharing solutions, and enhancing facilitation practices to improve learning outcomes.

To boost learner engagement, creative activities such as a rangoli and drawing competition were organized on 30 March in Kalpur Kala (Kamini Kala), along with a game-based learning session on 19 March in Rauchan led by Pratima Dhurve.

These initiatives significantly enhanced participation, creativity, and overall learner engagement, making the learning process more interactive and effective.



## *Beyond Empowerment: Who Is Changing the Rules?*



### **Beyond Empowerment: Who Is Changing the Rules?**

Every year, around International Women's Day, we find the right words. We speak about strength. About resilience. About women who inspire us. And for a moment, it feels right. Necessary, even.

But once the day passes, everything quietly returns to normal.

And I keep coming back to one question — what are we really teaching our girls on all the other days? Because gender is not shaped on a stage. It is shaped in everyday life.

In small, repeated moments. In who speaks and who stays quiet. In who is asked to adjust and who is allowed to decide. In who carries responsibility, and who carries authority. These things are rarely announced. They are absorbed.

A girl does not wake up one day and decide to limit herself. She learns it slowly. In the way she is corrected. In the way she is watched. In the way her choices are weighed against "what will people say". She learns that respect is something she must constantly earn.

In many rural homes, this learning begins early. Not always through harsh rules, but through quiet expectations. Sit properly. Speak softly. Don't argue. Don't draw attention. Don't make things difficult. Over time, these instructions stop sounding like restrictions. They begin to feel like **common sense**.

Through phones, films, reels, and advertisements, young people are constantly being shown what a "better life" looks like. How to look, how to behave, what to desire. The message is subtle, but persistent- be more, look better, become someone worth noticing.

So now, a young girl is growing up between two very different pressures.

One tells her to stay within limits. The other tells her to transform herself into something desirable.

And somehow, she is expected to manage both. She may still have limited say in decisions about her education, mobility, or future. But she is already being told how she should look, how she should present herself, how she should measure her worth. This contradiction does not stay outside. It settles inside. And it shapes how she sees herself.

Boys, too, are learning in their own way.

They are taught what strength should look like. What authority feels like. What it means to be "in control". They are rarely taught how to share power, how to sit with discomfort, how to listen without needing to dominate.

So, when we speak about gender, we are not just speaking about women.

We are speaking about a system of learning — one that is constantly reinforcing itself, across homes, media, relationships, and institutions. And this is where I find myself thinking differently about change.

Because participation alone is not transformation.

Bringing women into spaces is important. Encouraging girls to speak is important. But what happens after that? Do their voices carry weight? Do decisions shift? Do expectations change? Or do we simply create moments of expression inside unchanged systems? Sometimes, change does not begin with instruction. It begins with interruption.

For many women, especially those whose lives have followed a predictable rhythm of duty and responsibility, even stepping into a different space - physically or emotionally can open something. Not in a dramatic way. Not instantly. But quietly.

A thought that lingers. A question that wasn't there before. A possibility that did not exist earlier. And that is not a small thing. Because gender inequality does not continue only because people don't know better. It continues because it is comfortable. Because it is familiar. Because it is rarely interrupted. Families adjust around it.

Communities justify it. Systems accommodate it. Even love learns to exist within it. So, if we are serious about change, then we must move beyond appreciation.

We must be willing to disturb what feels normal.  
And also, to reflect on what we are unintentionally reinforcing.

Through what we say. Through what we show. Through what we celebrate. Through what we ignore.  
Because young people are always watching. Always learning.

Not just from what we teach them directly, but from what we accept without question.  
Women's Day, perhaps, is not just a moment to celebrate.

It is a moment to pause and ask — are we preparing girls to navigate an unequal world, or are we willing to question the world itself?

Because real transformation will not come from making women stronger within the same boundaries.  
It will come when those boundaries begin to shift.

***Manisha Motwani***  
***Program Manager***



## *From Soil to Prosperity: How Kabirdham Farmers Are Rewriting Their Future*

Kabirdham has always depended on agriculture—but for years, farmers were stuck in a cycle of rising costs, poor soil health, and water shortages. Hard work alone wasn't enough anymore. Farming was becoming risky, unpredictable, and barely profitable.

That's where things started to change.

Under the CHiRP initiative, farmers in Kawardha and Pandariya were introduced to practical, sustainable methods—not theory, but real, field-tested solutions. Techniques like Direct Seeded Rice (DSR), Alternate Wetting and Drying (AWD), use of biofertilizers like Jeevamrit, crop diversification, and soil-water conservation were demonstrated on the ground, with continuous support.

The result? Visible, measurable impact.

Soil started holding more moisture. Fertility improved. Crop quality got better. And most importantly—costs dropped by 20–30%. Farmers who once focused only on yield began thinking in terms of profit and long-term sustainability.

But the real shift wasn't just in the fields—it was in mindset.

With improved income and reduced risks, families gained stability. Farming became more reliable. Some even created year-round income opportunities instead of depending on a single crop cycle.

And like any real change, it spread. One farmer's success pushed others to experiment. Today, more farmers are adopting DSR, moving toward natural farming, and diversifying crops. What started as an intervention is now becoming a community-driven movement.

This isn't just an agriculture story. It's proof that when farmers get the right support and practical solutions, they don't just survive—they adapt, grow, and take control of their future.

**Surendra Sonkar,**  
**Program Officer**  
**Kabirdham**



## *Hydroponic Vertical Farming: A Step Towards Modern Agriculture*

Agriculture is rapidly evolving, and as an agronomist, my focus has always been on promoting techniques that increase productivity while conserving natural resources. Hydroponic vertical farming is one such innovative solution that I have explored and promoted among farmers and youth.

Hydroponic farming is a modern method where crops are grown without soil using nutrient-rich water. In vertical systems, plants are arranged in layers, allowing higher production in limited space. This technology is especially useful in areas with limited land and water resources.

I adopted this method after observing key challenges in traditional farming, such as rising costs, water scarcity, and unstable income. Hydroponic systems address these issues by saving up to 80–90% water, enabling year-round production, and ensuring better quality produce.

Crops like lettuce, spinach, coriander, fenugreek, cherry tomato, cucumber, and capsicum perform well in this system. Beyond cultivation, hydroponic farming also offers strong opportunities for agri-entrepreneurship, benefiting farmers, youth, and women self-help groups.

This approach aligns with the principle of “more production with fewer resources” by conserving water, reducing soil degradation, and promoting sustainable agriculture.

***Om Prakash Bhaskar***  
***Program Officer***  
***Kabirdham***



## *Menstruation: From Awareness to Action*

Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) is widely discussed, but awareness alone isn't solving the problem. The real challenge is not menstruation itself, but the difficulty of managing it—especially in rural settings where cost, access, privacy, and social comfort shape choices.

For many girls and women, periods bring a hidden mental burden—constant worry, hesitation, and stress. Cloth is commonly used but not always easy to manage safely, while sanitary pads are often unaffordable or inconsistently available. When solutions are impractical, women don't stop their lives—they adjust them, often with discomfort and reduced confidence.

A one-time distribution is not a solution for a monthly need. What's required is a shift—from awareness to reliable access. This means ensuring affordable, locally available options through sustainable systems like SHGs, improved cloth practices, and consistent supply chains.

Because menstruation is not just about hygiene—it's about dignity, mental well-being, and peace of mind. Real change begins when every girl knows she can manage it, every month, without worry.

***Manisha Poyam***  
***Block Coordinator***  
***Keshkal, Kondagaon***



## *Invisible Burdens: The Unseen Side of Rural Strength*

Rural life is often seen as a symbol of resilience—people work hard, adapt to challenges, and keep moving forward despite uncertainty. But beneath this strength lies a quieter reality: emotional struggles that are rarely spoken about. In many villages, enduring hardship is normalized, while expressing feelings is not. Farmers, women, and youth carry stress silently, balancing responsibilities without space to pause or reflect.

The real issue is not just stress—it's silence. Conversations around mental health are limited, and fear of judgment keeps people from opening up. Yet, when safe spaces are created, something shifts. In small group discussions or informal settings, people begin to share. Even a simple question like "How are you feeling today" can unlock emotions held back for years.

Youth and women are especially vulnerable. Young people face pressure to meet expectations while shaping their future, often without guidance. Women, on the other hand, carry the emotional weight of families while neglecting their own well-being. Without support, these pressures quietly build over time.

Real change doesn't need complex systems—it starts small. Open conversations, peer support, and awareness at the community level can gradually break the silence. Rural strength has always been rooted in togetherness; extending that same support to mental well-being can create communities that are not just resilient, but truly compassionate and strong.

***Anyrose Todar***  
***District Coordinator***  
***Bilaspur***

## *From Shy to Change-Maker: Pallavi Talandi's Transformation Journey*

Pallavi Talandi from Modakpalli, under Gram Panchayat Cherpalli, has emerged as a powerful example of personal growth and resilience through the Beejadootir program. Once hesitant and reserved, she avoided social interactions and community participation.

In just five months as a volunteer, Pallavi transformed her confidence and communication skills. She now engages openly with people and expresses her ideas with clarity and impact.

She actively contributed to her community by organizing school committee meetings, participating in motivational programs, and supporting pregnant women with essential information.

Today, Pallavi stands as a confident and proactive community leader, proving that with the right support and determination, individuals can overcome their limitations and drive meaningful change.



***Pallavi Talandi Bijaduteer volunteer***

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## *From Despair to Dignity: Shyambati's Road Back to Herself*

Shyambati Das, an Anganwadi worker from Tokapal Block, was identified during a routine field visit — quietly carrying a weight she had not yet found words for. A deeply personal crisis at home had unravelled her sense of stability, and over time, the distress became severe. She stopped going to work for nearly six months, and began experiencing episodes that her community described as "mata chadhna" — trance-like states triggered by devotional music, alongside hearing voices and escalating conflict at home.

The programme team began regular home-based sessions — not with clinical distance, but with consistent presence and genuine listening. Grounding practices like Om chanting, art-based exercises, and daily evening walks helped restore calm and routine. Recognising that family dynamics were at the heart of the situation, the team also worked with her husband and the broader household, encouraging accountability and reducing tensions within the community.

Gradually, Shyambati returned to herself. The episodes ceased. Her emotional stability was restored. Her husband began engaging more positively in family life. And she returned to her work as an Anganwadi worker — meaning that an entire community of mothers and young children had their trusted support back.

"She came to us carrying deep pain. Today she stands stronger, supporting both her family and her community."

***Shyambati Das Anganwadi Worker — Tokapal Block***

## *From Hesitation to Confidence: The Boldakala Transformation*

Boldakala, a small village in Kabirdham, initially struggled to embrace the Pragati Program. Many learners had stayed away from studies for years and lacked the confidence to return.

At this crucial point, Prerak Ms. Suman Manikpuri stepped in. Instead of forcing change, she built trust—visiting homes, speaking with families, and consistently motivating learners to see the value of education.

She didn't just promote studying; she made them understand why it matters—how education improves thinking, builds awareness, and opens better opportunities in life.

Slowly, attitudes began to shift. Learners who were once hesitant are now confident and actively attending the camp every day.

This change isn't accidental. It's the direct result of consistent effort, personal connection, and refusal to give up. Boldakala proves that real impact happens when someone takes responsibility and follows through.



***Suman Manikpuri village - Bodla Kawardha***

## *Beyond Awareness: Turning Mental Health Support into Real Change*

Gopal Ratre, a dedicated Yuvodaya volunteer, has been actively supporting his community for the past three years, with a strong focus on mental health. Drawing from his own experiences, he understands that awareness alone is not enough—timely, practical support is what truly changes lives.

During a village awareness session, a man shared his struggles with anger, unemployment, and constant conflict at home. Instead of stopping at listening, Gopal followed up, identified the root cause—lack of work—and took action. Using his local network, he connected the man with a contractor, helping him secure regular employment.

This simple but targeted intervention reduced stress, improved family relationships, and restored stability in their lives. It highlights a hard truth: mental health issues are often tied to economic realities, and real impact comes from addressing both—not just talking about them.

***Gopal Ratre Yuvoday Volunteer (Bilaspur)***

## *From Barriers to Access: How One Volunteer Transformed Community Services*

Punam Gautam, a committed Yuvoday Volunteer, made a tangible difference by improving access to essential social security services in her community. Identifying the challenges people faced in availing government schemes, she took focused action to bridge these gaps with dedication and consistency.

She successfully facilitated the updating of 50 Ayushman Cards, enabling families to access critical healthcare benefits under the Ayushman Bharat Scheme. Alongside this, she supported several community members in updating their Voter ID cards, strengthening their ability to participate in the democratic process.

Her efforts reduced service barriers, increased awareness, and built trust within the community. As a result, many families can now access healthcare and exercise their rights with confidence—demonstrating how grassroots action can lead to real, measurable impact.



***Punam Gautam Yuvoday Volunteer (Bilaspur)***

## *A Card That Arrived Just in Time*

Ram Prasad, a 30-year-old resident of Changori village, Kota Block, had no Ayushman Bharat health card and was unaware of the benefits available to him. Like many in his community, the gap between government entitlements and actual access meant a critical safety net remained out of reach.

During a village-level awareness activity under the Aao Baat Karein programme, the team met Ram Prasad, explained the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, verified his eligibility, and supported him through the process of obtaining his card.

Months later, Ram Prasad met with a serious road accident requiring immediate hospitalisation. It was at this moment that the card proved its worth – enabling him to access treatment without the financial burden that would otherwise have overwhelmed his family. He recovered fully, and his family was protected from potentially catastrophic medical expenses at one of the most vulnerable moments of their lives.

Ram Prasad's story is a reminder that mental health and wellbeing cannot be separated from access to basic entitlements. When communities are informed and supported to claim what is rightfully theirs, the impact can be immediate, tangible, and lifesaving.

***Ram Prasad - Changor Village, Kota Block***

## *"Aao Baat Karein" A Community-Led Transformation Story*

In Gram Panchayat Shankarpur, Farasgaon block of Kondagaon district, an adolescent girl facing severe mental health challenges was once misunderstood, isolated, and subjected to unscientific practices, which worsened her condition.

The turning point came when a teacher flagged the issue, and volunteers Kamal Kishore Pandey from Yuvodaya Kondanar Champs took initiative. With support from Chhattisgarh Agricon Samiti and guidance from the District Administration, the case was linked to the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP).

Under the "Aao Baat Karein" initiative, sustained efforts were made to sensitize the family, school, and community, creating a supportive and non-judgmental environment. The girl was connected to counseling, treatment, and continuous follow-up support.

Today, she has shown significant improvements and she is living safely with her family, continuing her education, and has appeared for her Class 11 exams. Most importantly, the community that once distanced itself now supports and stands by her, reflecting a powerful shift in awareness and acceptance.



***Dhaneshwar - Yuvodaya Kondanar Champs***





# CHHATTISGARH AGRICON SAMITI

404, Progressive Point, Lalpur, Raipur (C.G.)

मानसिक स्वास्थ्य  +91 8123922651

हेल्पलाइन नंबर :  +91 7898987848