

ELITE

ENHANCING LIVING EXPERIENCES OF THE ELDERLY



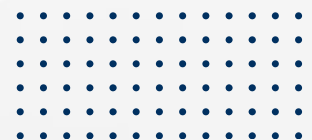
**2024-2025
ANNUAL REPORT**





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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed to the successful implementation of the ELITE project in its first year.

Our sincere thanks to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for their support and funding, and to the staff of Department of Community Medicine, MGIMS, for their guidance and expertise.

We appreciate the cooperation of the CEO, Zilla Parishad Wardha, DHO, THOs, MOs, and CHOs in integrating the project into the healthcare system.

Our sincere appreciation goes to the Aadharwad Members, whose dedication and community engagement have played a crucial role in strengthening our project.

A special thanks to the ASHA Facilitators and ASHAs, their dedication and efforts in forming and nurturing Sanjeevani groups in all the villages have been the backbone of our intervention.

Special thanks to the Sarpanches and local governance bodies for their support in mobilizing communities.

Above all, we deeply appreciate the elders in our villages, whose enthusiasm and participation have been the true driving force behind this initiative. Their willingness to embrace self-care has transformed aging into a celebration.

Together, we have made the first year of ELITE a meaningful journey, and we look forward to continued collaboration in the years ahead.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Population aging is a global phenomenon fuelled by increased life expectancy and advancements in healthcare. By 2050, the global population aged 60 and older is projected to double, resulting in profound demographic shifts, particularly in developing nations like India. Currently, India has over 104 million elderly individuals, constituting 8.6% of the population. By 2050, this figure is expected to rise to 20%, presenting significant challenges for healthcare systems, which must adapt to an increased demand for geriatric care.

Enhancing Living Experiences of the Elderly (ELITE) project was conceptualized to empower elderly individuals through self-care, promote healthy aging, and create age-integrated societies. A hybrid implementation research model was utilized to integrate current provisions for elderly care at Health and Wellness Centers (HWCs) with community participation.

Throughout the year, the ELITE project has made substantial strides, most notably through the establishment of “Sanjeevani” (Sahjeevan) elderly support groups. These groups not only provide a support network for the elderly but also foster meaningful interactions with younger generations. Intergenerational activities are a core aspect of the project, allowing elderly individuals to engage with youth, share experiences, and pass on cultural knowledge, which strengthens community bonds.

This initiative has yielded positive results, enhancing the physical, mental, and social well-being of older adults. Moreover, the intergenerational engagement supports adolescent development and early childhood care by creating a sense of community and continuity across age groups. The project exemplifies a holistic approach to elderly care, promoting healthier, happier aging experiences while addressing the broader needs of a changing demographic landscape.



ELITE

ENHANCING LIVING EXPERIENCES OF THE ELDERLY

The ELITE project supported by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and implemented by the **Dept. of Community Medicine, Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, (MGIMS) Sevagram** in partnership with the **Wardha District Health System** and a Civil Society Organization named **Aadharwad**.

The project will be implemented for 3 years (2024 -2027) in 105 villages under the 5 PHCs (Rural areas) and 2 HWCs (Urban areas) of the Wardha block of Wardha district. The block has rural and urban areas with a population of 3.5Lakhs.

The project adopted a cascade model of training for capacity building of, HWC Staff, frontline workers (ASHAs), and the elderly from villages. This project envisions the role of the Health and Wellness Centres in strengthening the routine and necessary geriatric care services to the elderly population.

The ELITE project focus on improving the health and well-being of the elderly aged > 60 years.



AIM

The project aims to strengthen geriatric health care by focusing primarily on strengthening the community-based processes for better acceptability, relevance and sustainability of the Intervention.



OBJECTIVES

● Empower Elderly

To explore and implement community-based strategies that empower the elderly for self-care and create a supportive environment at the community level to promote healthy aging.

● Integrating HWCs

To integrate existing healthcare provisions available through Health and Wellness Centers for elderly care, ensuring accessibility and utilization for their well-being.

● Intergenerational Engagement

To foster intergenerational engagement by encouraging the involvement of the elderly in early childhood development and adolescent well-being.

● Age Integrated Societies

To promote age-integrated societies by creating opportunities for meaningful interactions between different generations, enhancing social cohesion and mutual support.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

• LIASIONING WITH STAKEHOLDERS



CEO, ZP Wardha



District Health Officer



Medical Officer



Community Health Officer



ASHA



Sarpanch

• FORMATIVE RESEARCH

Formative research was carried for understanding the needs, perceptions, and challenges of elderly self-care in rural communities. Participatory Learning Action (PLA) techniques such as daily activity calendar, free listing, FGDs, IDIs and quantitative survey were conducted with the elders and service providers. It ensures that ELITE's approach is evidence-based, community-driven, and impactful in promoting happy and healthy aging.



**Daily Activity
Calendar**



**Focus Group
Discussion**



**In Depth
Interview**

FINDINGS

The elders maintain a well-structured daily routine, balancing self-care, household tasks, social roles, and leisure. They actively engage in family, community, and spiritual practices, emphasizing the significance of physical activity and self-care in their lives.

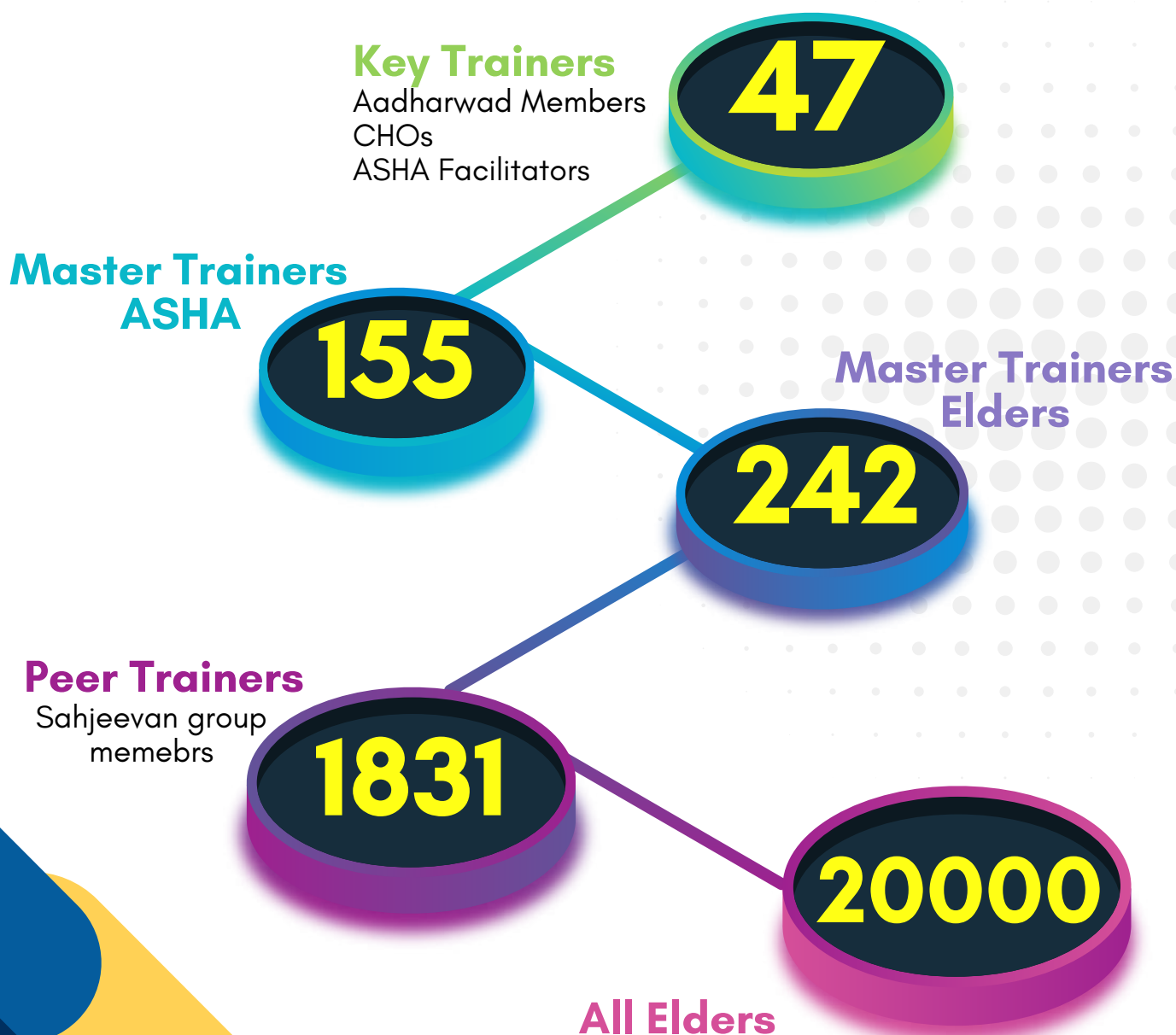
The elders as custodians of cultural heritage, eager to pass on traditions, skills, and wisdom to younger generations. Their active engagement in hobbies and festivals underscores their role in preserving well-being and cultural continuity within the community.

Elderly face physical, financial, and social challenges despite available healthcare services. Strengthening telemedicine awareness, equipping CHOs, and enhancing local outreach can bridge critical gaps, ensuring better support and accessibility for healthy aging.

• CAPACITY BUILDING

The cascade model of training plays a vital role in creating a sustainable and scalable approach to elderly care. By training a tiered group of trainers—from Key Trainers to Master Trainers and Peer Trainers—it ensures the widespread dissemination of self-care practices and the involvement of community members. This model empowers local leaders like ASHAs and elderly members, enabling them to act as change agents within their villages. It fosters ownership, enhances community engagement, and promotes continuous learning. The cascade structure ensures that the training reaches a large number of elderly people, creating a ripple effect that drives long-term impact in promoting healthy aging.

We have completed training of 2 Modules



• GLIMPSES OF TRAINING



I like the way of training and all the sessions were really engaging. I love the games, activities and the energizers conducted. This was the best training, I have attended in my career.

CHO (Key Trainer)



The training was really nice and the session are conducted in very easy and playful manner, that I feel confident I can deliver the training to the elders in my village.

- ASHA (Master Trainer)

• SAHJEEVAN MELAWA (COMMUNITY FAIR)

We organised and conducted the Sahjeevan Melawas at the PHC level as part of Module 2 Training of Master Trainers (ASHAs & Elderly). These vibrant community fairs were designed to challenge ageism, promote intergenerational bonding, and spread awareness about our initiative to empower elders in child caregiving and self care practices.

With the incredible support of Primary Health Centers, Gram Panchayats, Zilla Parishad Schools, Anganwadi Centers, and Mahila Bachat Gats, the Melawas became a true celebration for villagers of all ages. The happiness on the faces of elderly participants as they played games, painted, and engaged in activities was priceless.

We have conducted 5 Melawas which was graced and enjoyed by 700 adults and 500 children.



It was fun, I remembered my childhood, I felt like I had gone from old age to childhood again. I enjoyed playing the games.

-80 year old Male from Anji PHC

• COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Under the project various community-level activities are conducted across villages during festivals to bring elderly together, foster intergenerational bonding, and create a joyful environment. Celebrations like Pola, Navratri, Makar Sankranti, Elderly sports day, Yoga activity serve as opportunities for elders to participate in cultural programs, traditional games, clay making and storytelling with children and youth. These activities not only revive their social engagement but also strengthen connections between generations, enhancing their sense of belonging and emotional well-being. Through music, dance, and art, the elderly experience a renewed sense of joy by remembering their own childhood.



POLA Activity

On the occasion of the Pola festival, we organized a clay ox-making activity in several villages, bringing together elders and adolescents.

NAVRATRI Celebration

On the occasion of Navratri, we organized a special Garba program for the elderly in Padegaon village, where many elders came together to celebrate through dance and music.



YOGA Activity

In response to the villagers' request, we organized a yoga session for the elderly in Bhugaon village. Guided by Mr. Damodhar Raut and Mrs. Pranita Gulhane.

ELDERLY SPORTS Day

On the occasion of New Year, we organized an elderly sports day in Rotha village, where many elders took part in various games.



FROM THE FIELD

AGING IS INEVITABLE FOR THE BODY, BUT NEVER FOR THE MIND



Fifteen kilometers from Wardha, in the village of Zadgaon, resides a 65-year-old young man Mr. Ratnakar Avchat, fondly known as RK, with an undying curiosity and innovative spirit. He spends his time repairing household appliances, experimenting and finding solutions to fix broken devices. To aid his learning, he refers to YouTube tutorials and reads any material he can find on the subject. With a smile, he says, **"It's okay if something cannot be repaired, but I will never let it damage."**

Growing up in Zadgaon, he balanced education with farm work. As a young man, he took up electrical board fitting, hand pump repairs, and running a cycle store and dal mill to sustain himself. His passion for machinery led him to Gram Vikas Training Center, Pipri, Wardha, in 1987, where he trained in electric motor winding. By 1988, he had started repairing household electrical appliances like fans and tape recorders.

His deep connection to agriculture led him to explore innovative solutions for farmers. He successfully invented a tur pod-cutting machine, which proved effective and was widely used in his village. However, due to a lack of awareness about patents, it didn't reach a larger audience. Around the same time, he became Treasurer at Gram Vikas Training Center, a role he humorously calls his "unpaid full-time officer" job.

In 2013, his innovative spirit led him to develop yet another invention, which he initially named "Jhatka". The villagers fondly coined the phrase: **"वापरा झाडगाव चा झटका आणि मिळवा जनावरांपासून सुटका"** (Use the Zadgaon Jhatka and get rid from animals)

Several newspapers took note of his invention and published articles about his work. To this day, he treasures those newspaper cuttings as a reminder of his journey.



**Mr. Ratnakar Avchat
with his device "Jhatka"**

His message for today's generation:

**"It's okay for the body to age,
but never let the mind grow old!"**

Originally written: Mr Jitendra Sahare
Translated by: Dr Rahul Pethe

ADVOCACY TALKS

On February 11, 2025, the ELITE team had a fruitful virtual advocacy meeting with the ARTH (Action for Research and Training for Health) team to exchange insights and experiences on elderly care initiatives.

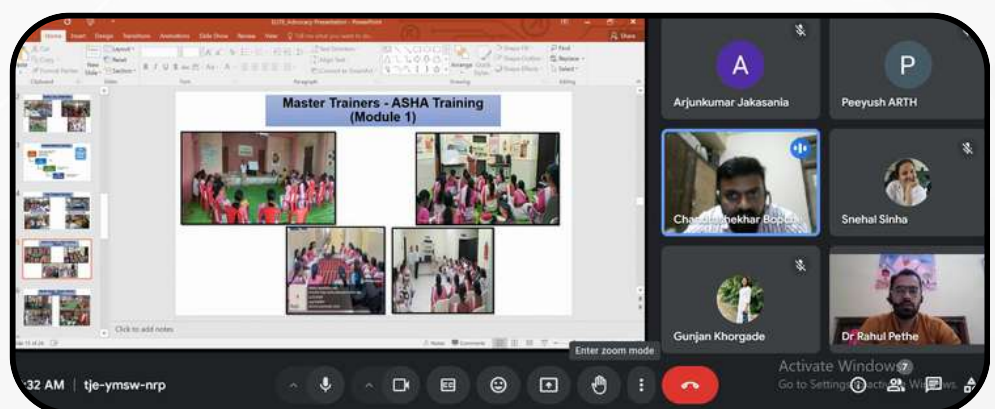
We presented ELITE Project, its implementation in the Wardha block, and the key learnings from our journey. In response, the ARTH team shared their experiences from their elderly project, "Prabhal Yatra", highlighting its impact, challenges, and unique approaches.

It was an engaging discussion that turned into a valuable cross-learning opportunity for both teams. We explored new ideas and innovative ways to reach and support the elderly population, reinforcing our shared mission of promoting happy and healthy aging while fostering elder-friendly societies.

Participants:

ARTH team: Peeyush BPT, MPH, Snehal Sinha, Gunjan Khorgade

ELITE team: Arjinkumar Jakasania, Dr Rahul Pethe, Chandrashekhar Bopche



PARTNERS MEETING

On the occasion of New Year, we organized a delightful get-together cum meeting with our partners Aadharwad Members on 2nd January 2025 to celebrate the New Year in a truly meaningful way.

The event was a perfect blend of innovation, engagement, and intergenerational bonding. Flower & leaf Painting, unique dumsharads and games were played. The detailed discussion was done focusing on strengthening project activities and raising awareness about ageism, bridging the gap between generations.

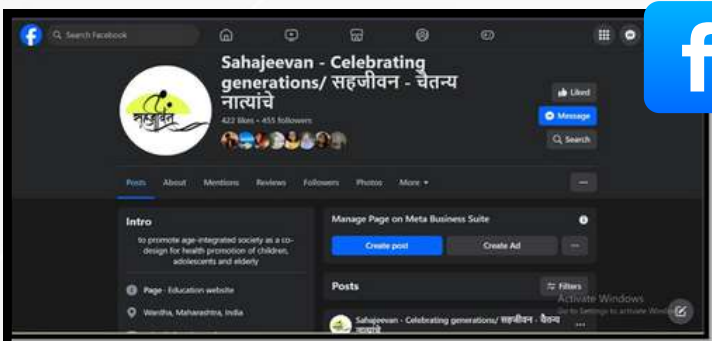
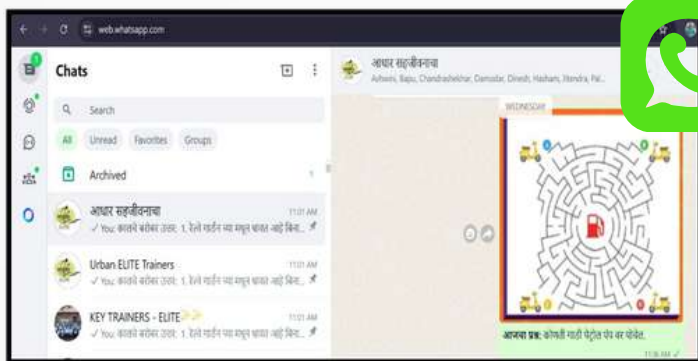
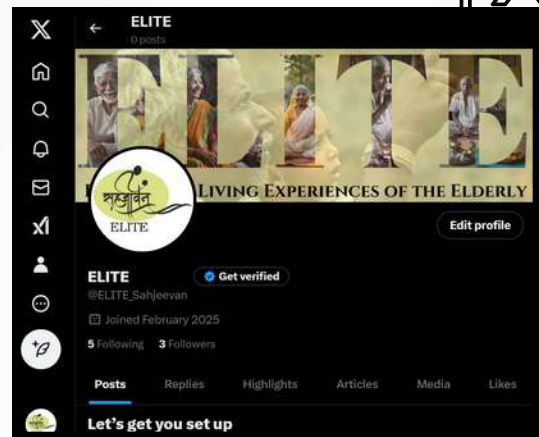
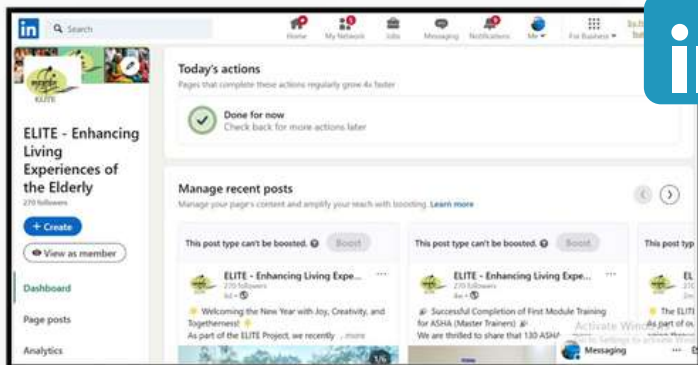
A discussion was done regarding conducting the Ageism talks in the schools, issuing the Sahjeevan newsletter and strengthening project activities in the urban areas.

The atmosphere was filled with happiness, smiles, and enthusiastic participation. To end the day on a magical note, the Aadharwad Members performed a heartfelt song, leaving everyone spellbound and making the evening truly unforgettable.



SOCIAL MEDIA

ELITE utilizes an extensive approach, leveraging various social media platforms to enhance the dissemination of elderly care messages and project activities, thus reaching a wider audience of caregivers. By using the power of social media channels, we aim to maximize project impact and effectively connect with caregivers across different demographics and regions. This holistic strategy highlights the dedication of raising awareness and empowering elders.



EXPOSURE VISIT



On 8th Aug 2024, the ELITE team, along with Staff from Community Medicine department, Master Trainers from various villages and members of Aadharwad NGO, conducted an exposure visit to the Jan Seva Gramin Vikas and Shikshan Sanstha, Chandrapur. The purpose of the visit was to observe and understand the organization's Comprehensive Elderly Care Program and explore the impactful work being done for elderly care in the field. The participants were keen to learn about various activities that could be replicated in their own communities.



We observed the Comprehensive Elderly Care Program which provides various services and activities aimed at improving the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of the elderly. "Mayechi Sawali" initiative comes under the social aspect of the program is a dedicated center where elders come together daily to engage in simple activities. These activities includes, citing bhajans, yoga and exercise, playing games, reading books, social interaction.

****We are thankful to the team of Jan Seva Gramin Vikas and Shikshan Sanstha, Chandrapur for this visit and learnings.**

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https://x.com/ELITE_Sahjeevan

MEET OUR TEAM



Dr Arjunkumar Jakasania
Principal Investigator



Dr Rahul Pethe
Project Coordinator



Chandrashekar Bopche
Project Coordinator



Dinesh Dharpure
Field Coordinator



Pallavi Katarkar
Field Coordinator



Bapu Chavan
Field Coordinator



Ashwini Dambhare
Field Coordinator



Yogesh Dhok
Field Coordinator



Sarita Logade
Field Coordinator



Jitendra Sahare
Field Coordinator



Shubham Fulkari
Data Entry Operator



Savita Wanjari
Office Attendant

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- This report is for informational and advocacy purposes only.
- Views expressed are those of the project team and do not necessarily reflect the official stance of the funding agency or affiliated institutions.

****This annual report covers the ELITE project highlights from 15-02-2024 to 14-02-2025**



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CONTACT US



**Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation (GMLF), Ram Nagar,
Wardha. 442001**



9405518582, 9584649098



icmrelite@gmail.com