

ELITE

ENHANCING LIVING EXPERIENCES OF THE ELDERLY



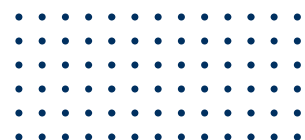
2025-2026

ANNUAL REPORT

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Acknowledgment

With gratitude to all who made the second year of ELITE possible

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed to the successful implementation of the ELITE project in its first year. Together, we have made the first year of ELITE a meaningful journey and we look forward to continued collaboration in the years ahead.



Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)

For their generous support and funding that makes this three-year initiative possible.

Department of Community Medicine, MGIMS Sevagram

For their invaluable guidance, technical expertise, and unwavering support throughout the implementation.

CEO Zilla Parishad Wardha, DHO, THOs, MOs & CHOs

For their cooperation in integrating the project into the existing healthcare system.

Aadharwad Members

Whose dedication and deep community engagement have played a crucial role in strengthening our project.

ASHA Facilitators and ASHAs

The backbone of our intervention – for their tireless dedication in forming and nurturing Sanjeevani groups across all villages.

Sarpanches, School Teachers & Anganwadi Tai

For their enthusiastic support in mobilizing communities and fostering intergenerational engagement.

Executive Summary

Overview of the ELITE Project — Second Year 2025-2026



104M+

Elderly in India Today

8.6%

Current Share
of Population

20%

Projected Share by
2050

2×

Global Elderly
Population Growth by
2050

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.

The 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.

About 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 3.5 lakhs.

105

Villages

5

Rural PHCs

2

Urban HWCs

3.5L

Population

3 Yrs

Duration

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 Centers in strengthening the routine and necessary geriatric care services to the elderly population. The ELITE project focuses on improving the health and well-being of the older adults 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

Four pillars guiding the ELITE project towards healthy, dignified aging

Empower Elderly

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

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 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.

Project Structure

The ELITE project focuses on improving the health and well-being of older adults aged >60 years through a hybrid implementation research model that integrates community participation with existing healthcare provisions at Health and Wellness Centers (HWCs).



Project Activities

Building community capacity through a multi-tier cascade approach

Cascade Training Model

The ELITE project employs a cascade model of training, a structured, multi-level approach designed to empower elders for self-care and health management through comprehensive capacity-building.



1. Key Trainers: Key trainers, including ELITE team members, CHOs, ASHA facilitators, and NGO members, receive intensive training sessions. They are equipped with foundational knowledge and skills to act as primary resource persons for the subsequent levels of training.

2. Master Trainers: The trained key trainers disseminate their knowledge to master trainers. These master trainers consist of ASHA and selected elderly representatives, ensuring the training is localized and accessible.

3. Peer Trainers: Selected community members, including older adult volunteers and local leaders, are trained as peer trainers. This group is crucial for maintaining the momentum of the project by spreading knowledge and engaging directly with their communities in both formal and informal ways.

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.

Capacity Building

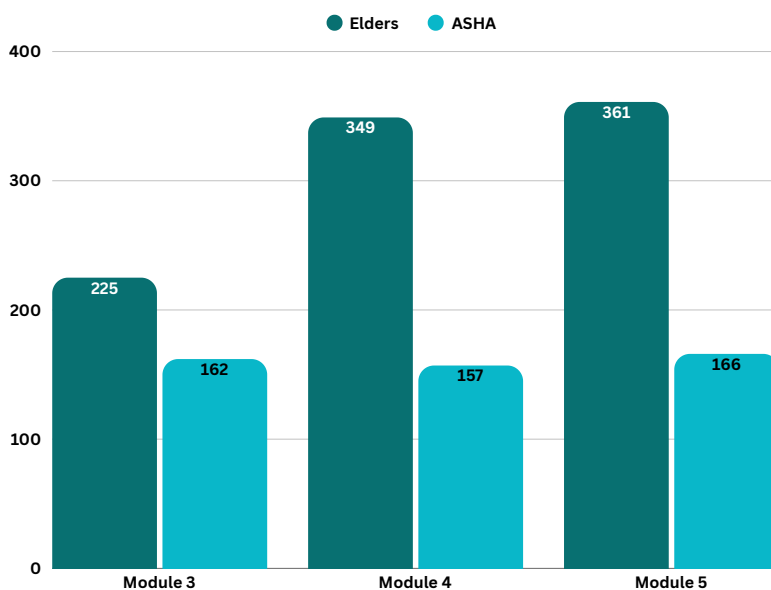
Master Trainers and Peer Trainers trained across Modules 3, 4 & 5

Master Trainer Training

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.



Total Master Trainers Trained



Graph showing the ASHA and Older Adults trained as Master Trainers

“

The training includes engaging activities, useful information, and a supportive environment where everyone is understood, which makes us feel very enthusiastic. That is why we truly enjoy attending these sessions.”

-70 years old female Master Trainer

”

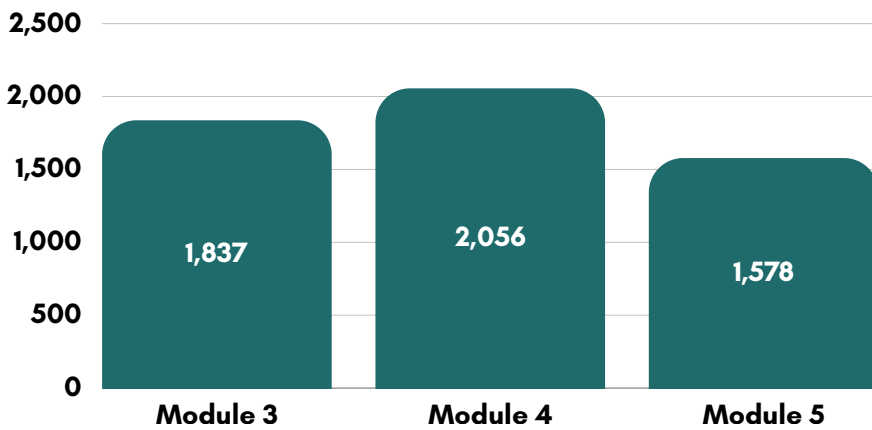


Peer Trainer

Peer training under the ELITE project empowers elderly participants to become peer trainers within their communities. Trained elders share knowledge on self-care, mental well-being, and healthy aging with fellow group members in a simple and relatable manner. This approach strengthens community ownership, builds confidence among elders, and promotes sustainable learning through mutual support.



Total Peer Trainers Trained



Graph showing the peer trainers trained

“After participating in this training, we gain useful knowledge for ourselves. Active participation helps us understand the topics more clearly and makes it easier to apply what we learn in our daily lives.”
 -78-year-old male peer trianer



Monthly Meetings

Regular Sahjeevan group meetings at the village level

133

Sahjeevan Support Groups

848

Monthly Meetings
Conducted

17,000+

Elders Participated



Monthly meetings of the Sahjeevan group in every village are conducted regularly by ASHAs and the Master Trainers of respective villages to promote self-care practices, elderly engagement, social inclusion, and well-being. These meetings include discussions, health education and awareness sessions, fun games, and interactive activities.

Elderly members share experiences, seek guidance, and strengthen community bonds. Monthly meetings ensure sustained engagement and involvement of ASHA and elders in elderly care.

Key Activities at Monthly Meetings: Health education & awareness sessions • Fun games & interactive activities • Peer support discussions • Self-care practice sharing • Social inclusion activities to reduce loneliness



Community Activities

Promoting healthy, active and dignified aging across villages

Under the ELITE Project, we have conducted a range of community-based activities to promote healthy, active, and dignified aging among older persons. Through the self-care and health promotion sessions, funny activities, traditional festivals, and intergenerational interactions, the project creates supportive spaces for elderly participation and peer support.

21**Anji
PHC****18****Kharangana
PHC****10****Talegaon
PHC****21****Waifad
PHC****12****Waigaon
PHC****83****Total
Activities**

"There is no greater culture than bringing joy to elderly people through various games and activities."

— 62-year-old female participant

These community activities help reduce loneliness, improve awareness about physical and mental health, and encourage elders to take an active role in their own care. By involving ASHAs, community stakeholders, and older adults in the village, 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.

Sahjeevan Melava

Community Fairs celebrating intergenerational bonding

30

Melawas Conducted at
PHC & HWC Level



2278

Adults Participated



1950

Children Participated



We organised and conducted the Sahjeevan Melawas at the PHC & HWC level as part of Module 2 Training of Master Trainers & Peer 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.

"A beautiful initiative that brings together three generations is called the Sahjeevan Gathering (Meet).."

– 62-year-old male participant

Global Intergenerational Week 2025

Global Intergenerational Week 2025 — April 24–30, 2025



Leading India's GIW 2025 Celebrations

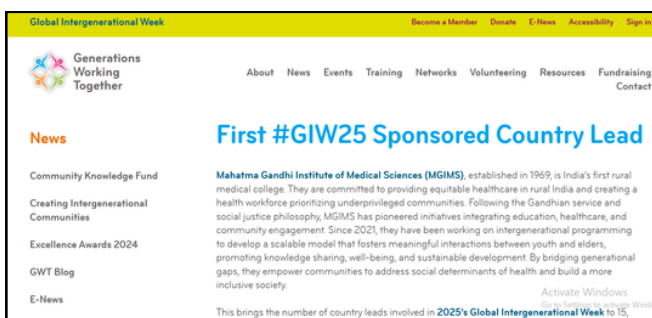
From 24th to 30th April 2025, the ELITE team successfully led the Global Intergenerational Week (GIW) celebrations in India as the Country Lead. Throughout the week, we organized a series of community-based intergenerational activities across villages, bringing children, youth, adults, and elders together.



MGIMS mentioned in the GIW 25 Impact report

Each day was focused on a specific theme, with events such as storytelling sessions, 2-generational sports, children-elderly meetups, art and craft activities, a webinar on ageism, and discussions promoting the connection across generations. The week strengthened intergenerational bonding, encouraged mutual learning, and showcased the power of community engagement in fostering healthy and happy aging.

Activities Conducted During the Week



MGIMS in the GWT Newspeice

Advocacy Talks

Building networks, sharing knowledge, and influencing policy on healthy aging

April 26, 2025 — Virtual

1. Advocacy Meeting: ARTH NGO, Rajasthan

The ELITE team held a virtual advocacy meeting with the ARTH team to share experiences on elderly care initiatives. Both teams discussed the ELITE Project and ARTH's "Prabhal Yatra," creating a valuable cross-learning opportunity to explore new ideas for promoting happy and healthy aging.

March 25, 2025 — Virtual Meeting

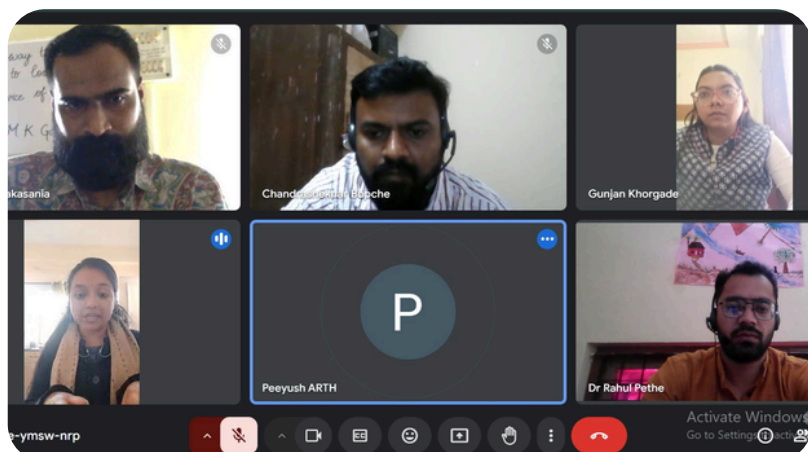
2. Advocacy Meeting: Healthy Aging India

We had a virtual meeting with the Healthy Aging organization. Dr. Arjunker J. presented the ELITE project, and Dr. Manjiri shared Healthy Aging's work on intergenerational programming. The session was a valuable exchange of ideas and strengthened our commitment to promoting healthy and happy aging.

GERICON 2025 — AFMC Pune

3. National Conference Presentation

Dr. Rahul Pethe from the ELITE team attended and presented a paper at GERICON 2025. The title of the paper was, "*Exploring Socio-Demographic Predictors of Social Connectedness Among the Older Adults in Rural India.*"



From the Field

Stories of resilience, innovation, and the spirit of active aging

A JOURNEY SHAPED BY HER OWN HANDS

Sometimes, the most extraordinary battles are fought by those who appear the most ordinary. I realized this during a visit to a small village, where I met Sushila Kaku. What began as a casual conversation soon turned profound when she looked at a nearby tree and said firmly, **“Every woman must learn to stand on her own feet. As long as you have strength, you must earn your own living.” In that moment, I knew I was in the presence of a woman whose life was a lesson in resilience.**

Sushila’s journey began in the village of Virud, Akaji, in a family deeply influenced by the teachings of Rashtasant Tukdoji Maharaj. Life was simple and disciplined, filled with prayers, Abhangs, and Haripath. After completing her tenth grade, she married at twenty-one, but within a year and a half, her world changed—she returned to her father’s home with a two-month-old baby.

Burdened by the fear of dependency, she resolved to become independent. Despite initial hesitation from her father, she insisted on learning tailoring, promising to manage household responsibilities alongside. With a sewing machine gifted by her father, she began rebuilding her life.



Having lost her mother early, Sushila took on the responsibility of raising her six siblings, ensuring each one was settled. She spent sixteen years supporting her family before moving to Neri, only to lose her home again due to a dam project. Relocating to a rehabilitation site in Wardha, she faced financial hardship, social pressure, and uncertainty—but she did not give up.

For over fifty years, Sushila has sustained herself through tailoring. Today, at 74, her day begins at 4:00 AM with exercise and prayer, followed by household work and active involvement in her village self-help group. She is a respected figure in the community, often sought for advice.

Her earnings, sometimes in cash, sometimes in grain, support her and her granddaughter’s education. Her belief remains unwavering: “If you have courage, even God supports you.”

To her granddaughter, who calls her “Mai,” she is not just family, but a source of strength and inspiration.



Originally Written By: Sarita logade

Our Champions

Story of determination, innovation, and the spirit to work for the upliftment of community

THE ASHA WHO BUILT TOGETHERNESS

In the quiet, green embrace of the Wardha district lies the small village of Chaka Majra. For most, it is a place of peace and fields, but for Jayashree Tai Arunrao Umak, it is a landscape of duty and heart. At 51, Jayashree Tai is not just a resident; she is the village's ASHA worker, a beacon of health and hope under the National Rural Health Mission.



For 16 years, she has walked these dusty paths, tending to everyone from newborns to the elders. But she feels that, for a long time, the elderly of the village remained in the shadows of the healthcare system, their needs often overlooked. That changed when the "ELITE" project, an initiative by the MGIMS, Sevagram, arrived in Chaka Majra.



"When I first heard about Sahajeevan, something clicked inside me. I looked at the elderly members in my own home, and then I looked at myself. I realized that I, too, am walking toward that stage of life. I thought, **'If I join this project, I won't just be helping others; I will be learning how to navigate my own future.'** I wanted to build a bridge between the generations, and this was my chance.

The beginning was far from easy. When Jayashree Tai first approached the seniors, she was met with a wall of skepticism. "What is left for us at this age?" they would ask with heavy hearts. "Why should we come to these meetings? Our time has passed."

A 65-year-old woman shared, **"Asha Tai is like a pillar of support for the elderly. She works with a smiling face and a spirit of selfless service."**



Jayashree didn't argue. Instead, she used the tools she knew best: patience and love. "Just come once," she would say with a warm smile. "If you don't like it, you don't have to come back." Her simple, open invitation worked. One by one, the chairs at the meetings began to fill. As the meetings continued, the atmosphere in the village shifted.

The "Sahajeevan" gatherings became a sanctuary—a place where the elderly could laugh, share stories, and play games, leaving behind the loneliness and tensions of home.

Jayashree Tai says that the project has also helped in her own growth.

"I never thought I'd become tech-savvy at 51! I learned to take geo-tagged photos and scan documents. These may seem small, but they have made our work much easier. It felt like I was growing alongside the elders."

As a 70-year-old man said,

"She always checks on us. She feels less like a health worker and more like our own daughter."

Today, Jayashree Tai is more than an ASHA worker; she is an elderly champion. Through her efforts, she has shown that aging is not about fading away but about connection, dignity, and Sahajeevan; living together.



Originally Written By: Pallavi Katarkar

Ageism Sensitization Workshops

Breaking stereotypes and fostering empathy among future professionals



Under the ELITE Project, an ageism sensitization workshop was conducted at a social work college with the aim of breaking common stereotypes associated with aging and fostering empathy toward older persons.

The workshop engaged students in reflective discussions and interactive activities to challenge ageist beliefs, myths, and discriminatory attitudes toward the elderly. By highlighting the social, emotional, and structural challenges faced by older adults, the session helped build awareness and sensitivity among the young generation.

Why this matters: This initiative is significant in shaping future social work professionals who are more inclusive, respectful, and responsive to the needs and rights of older persons, thereby promoting **intergenerational understanding and dignity in aging.**



Partners Get-Together

January 16, 2026



On 16th January 2026, we organized a New Year and Makar Sankranti get-together with our partner Aadharwad Members. The event included engaging activities such as paper kite-making and games, creating a joyful and participatory atmosphere.

The meeting also focused on strengthening project activities, raising awareness about ageism, bridging the generation gap, issuing the Sahjeevan newsletter, expanding project activities in urban areas, and discussing the future direction of the project and the participation of members in the upcoming journey.

The program concluded with a heartfelt song performed by the Aadharwad members, making the gathering memorable for everyone.

Master Trainer Get-Together

January 17, 2026



On 17th January 2026, a New Year and Makar Sankranti get-together was organized with the Master Trainers. The event included fun games and interactive activities. The meeting focused on strengthening project activities, sustaining Sahjeevan groups in villages, identifying a fixed place for Sahjeevan centers, and discussing the future direction of the project. The program concluded with sharing tilgul laddus and traditional ukhane, reflecting Maharashtrian culture.

Exposure Visit

Cross-learning with ARTH NGO, Rajasthan — March 27–28, 2025



The ARTH team from Rajasthan visited the ELITE project for a 2-day exposure visit on March 27th and 28th, 2025, to observe and understand the implementation of the ELITE project in Wardha. The visit focused on understanding the learnings from our work and exploring ways to strengthen partnerships to make the world a better place for our elders. They had a great interaction with Dr. Subodh Gupta, Dr. Arjunker Jakasania and the ELITE team and understood the project implementation.



The ELITE team visited the ARTH NGO in Rajasthan and the Healthy Ageing site in Ranchi to gain practical insights into innovative elderly care models. At ARTH, the team learned about community-based elderly health interventions, while the Ranchi visit provided valuable understanding of intergenerational learning centers that foster connections between age groups. These visits enriched the team's approach to promoting healthy and active ageing through community engagement and intergenerational practices.



Purpose of the Visit:

- Understanding project learnings
- Exploring new partnerships
- Strengthening collaboration for scaling elderly care models across India

Social Media

Reaching wider audiences through strategic digital engagement

To reach more people and make a larger impact, we have leveraged social media platforms that serve distinct purposes, catering to different aspects of the ELITE project's community engagement goals.

LinkedIn

- 785 Followers
- 75 Posts
- 12,257 Impression

YouTube

- 228 Subscribers
- 31 Videos
- 16,200 Views

Instagram

- 296 Followers
- 315 Posts
- 52,329 Views (last 90 days)

Facebook

- 768 Followers
- 274 Posts
- 15,600 Views

पिढ्यांचे स्नेहबंध

वेगवेगळ्या वयाच्या पिढ्यांमधील (जसे की मुले, तरुण आणि ज्येष्ठ नागरिक) यांच्यात नियमित संवाद, आपुलकी, परस्पर आदर आणि एकमेकांच्या अनुभवांनुसार शिकण्याने जे नाते तयार होते, त्याला आंतरपिढी नाते असे म्हणतात.

याची गरज का आहे?

- आज कुटुंबे लहान झाली आहेत.
- पिढ्यांमधील संवाद कमी झाला आहे.
- वृद्धांना एकटेपणा वाटतो.
- ज्येष्ठांकडून तरुणांना मार्गदर्शन कमी मिळते.
- पिढ्यांमध्ये वैरसमज आणि अंतर वाढत आहे.

मुक्ताला आजी - आजोबांकडून काय शिकण्याचा मिळाला? घाली कमेंट करून

DO YOU KNOW?

12% of the total population in India consists of Elderly people.

Source: Senior Care Reforms in India by NITI Aayog - 2024

"ज्येष्ठांची गौरवगाथा"

मंगलाताई देशमुख

पूलई गावातील तेजस्वी प्रेरणास्त्रोत

स्वाइप करा आणि एका प्रेरणादायी स्त्रीची गोष्ट वाचा

Using each platform with a unique focus allows the ELITE project to maximize its reach, impact, and relevance across various audiences in the community.

Follow Us on Social Media



Let's Get Connected for Our Latest News & Updates



<https://intergenerational-sahjeevan.com/>



<https://www.facebook.com/sahjeevan.mgims>



https://www.instagram.com/elite_mgims/



YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/@sahjeevan>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/elite-enhancing-living-experiences-of-the-elderly/>



https://x.com/ELITE_Sahjeevan

Meet Our Team

The dedicated individuals behind the ELITE project



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Principal Investigator



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Project Coordinator



Dr. Aditya Burile

Project Coordinator



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Field Coordinator



Ashwini Dambhare

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Yogesh Dhok

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Disclaimer

- All photographs and stories in this report are published with informed consent, with necessary modifications to protect privacy.
- 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 15-02-2025 to 14-02-2026



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ELITE

ENHANCING LIVING EXPERIENCES OF THE ELDERLY

"Empowering every elder to live with dignity, purpose, and joy."



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MEDICAL RESEARCH
Serving the nation since 1911

