



Pushpanjali Trust

Mental Health matters

PUSHPANJALI TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT

2019/2020

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Vision

A just and inclusive society where persons with mental disabilities are cared for and have opportunities for personal growth and fulfillment.

Mission

To spread awareness about mental health and advocate for the rights of persons with mental disabilities, with focus on rehabilitation and integration in society.

About us

Pushpanjali Trust is a registered charitable Trust based in Chandigarh. We are a rights-based voluntary organization working in the areas of mental health and disability since 2018. We believe that people with mental health challenges have the 'right' and the 'abilities' to lead independent, fulfilling lives within their communities. We passionately advocate for inclusive assisted-living facilities in the community. Through close collaboration with mental health professionals, persons with mental disabilities, their friends and families, we endeavor to develop and promote a human-centered approach to mental well-being.

Message from our Honorary Advisor

Dr Kalyana Sundaram

Sr. Consultant Psychiatrist & Hon. Advisor

**Former CEO, Richmond Fellowship Society (RFS),
Bangalore Branch**



I first met Aditya when he had come to visit RFS Bangalore in 2016. He showed a keen interest in our rehabilitation facilities, especially our long term group home - Jyothi house. The following year Aditya visited again and requested that he be allowed to stay and interact with staff and residents. Seeing his sincerity and commitment, I allowed him to do so. He stayed with us for about two weeks, and had extensive discussions with staff and residents. He liked our ethos based on therapeutic community principles.

In 2018, Aditya visited UK and met with our founder, Elly Jansen. I was very impressed that Aditya had the motivation to go all the way to UK and visit different organizations there. During 2017-18, when Aditya was living in Bangalore briefly, we met a few times. Both of us shared a keen interest in setting up a training program for the support staff for persons with mental disabilities in a rehab facility. Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, this did not fructify, and in 2018, Aditya decided to move base to Chandigarh. I'm very happy that he has set up Pushpanjali Trust there and is working in the area of rehabilitation.

In 2019, Gurpreet Singh, a psychiatric social worker hired by the Trust, was sent to us for eight weeks' intensive training. Gurpreet showed keen interest and learnt the basic principles of psychosocial rehabilitation by interacting with the staff and clients. I was very impressed with his sincerity and motivation.

I wish everyone in Pushpanjali Trust all the very best in their future journey. I am happy to be their honorary advisor and would continue to mentor them.

From the Founder

Aditya Vikram Rametra
Managing Trustee,
Pushpanjali Trust



The year started with our campaign for 'right to community living' of persons with mental disabilities in Chandigarh gathering momentum. In fact as time went by, we were fully absorbed in this campaign. From sending multiple representations to different governments, drafting a model policy, mobilizing public support, meeting senior government officials and networking with other organizations and activists - this campaign became the hallmark of this year's activities. To determine the need for assisted living facilities in Chandigarh Tricity, we carried out an extensive survey among mental health professionals. We got in touch with many more persons with mental illness and their families, organized meetings and seminars, and enabled them to voice their concerns and needs. Time and again, we have found internalized stigma as the biggest stumbling block for individuals and families grappling with mental health challenges.

In August 2019, we hired our first-full time employee - Gurpreet Singh, a Psychiatric Social Worker trained at Government Medical College Hospital and Panjab University, Chandigarh. After a brief induction program in Chandigarh, Gurpreet was sent for long, intensive training in psycho-social rehabilitation to Athma Shakti Vidyalaya and Richmond Fellowship Society, Bangalore.

The Trustees finally established a corpus fund from their savings. (Until now, the trustees were donating funds periodically). Our approach to funding has been that one must have one's skin in the game. We have made a conscious decision to fund the initial few years' activities ourselves, and then start raising funds from professional organizations and donors whose values align with ours.

We expanded our activities initiated last year – Peer Support Groups for persons with mental illnesses, Caregivers Support Group, Awareness Campaigns, Research and Advocacy, and Media Outreach.

We filed our second PIL (Public Interest Litigation) in December 2019, for the states of Punjab and Haryana in the High Court in Chandigarh, for issuing directions to the two states to frame a policy for setting up “Group Homes” as envisaged under The Mental Healthcare Act, 2017.

Activities during 2019-20

The first six months were focused on our campaign for ‘right to community living’ of persons with mental disabilities. Several activities were undertaken towards this goal:

- Six meetings and information sharing sessions were held, attended by persons with mental illness and their families and mental health professionals in Chandigarh Tricity.
- Several representations and thoroughly revised Draft policies for setting up ‘Group Homes’ were sent to different government officials in UT Chandigarh.
- A follow-up representation and Draft policy note for setting up ‘Group Homes’ was sent to the governments of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.
- Three writing workshops were organized for persons with mental illness and their caregivers, so they could send in their concerns and representations to the government authorities.
- ‘Let’s talk mental health’ discussion series for persons with mental illness and their families and mental health professionals in Chandigarh Tricity. A total of six sessions were held during the year.
- Two awareness workshops were conducted on the various rights and provisions for persons with mental illness and their families in the new Mental Healthcare Act, 2017
- Two sessions were held for caregivers on filing RTIs to access information regarding various government schemes and projects.

Participation in WAPR-IC Conference in Chandigarh

The World Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation - India Chapter (WAPR-IC) held a Conference at Government Medical College Hospital (GMCH) Sector-32, Chandigarh, on 17-18 May, 2019. WAPR is an international NGO, composed mainly of interdisciplinary mental health professionals (psychiatrists, psychologists, nurses, social workers, occupational-therapists, social educators, etc.), and also people with service-user and family member experiences from all around in the World. The mission of the WAPR is the dissemination of principles and practices of psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery of persons with mental disorders. The theme of the conference was "Indigenous and Pragmatic Models for Rehabilitation: Focus for the Future".

Pushpanjali Trust was actively involved in the conference at various stages: planning, participation in panel discussions, and drafting recommendations for the UT Chandigarh Administration, and the states of Punjab, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh. The Trust also sponsored an award for 'Best original research in rehabilitation'

The following official meetings were held with UT Chandigarh Administration

- 10th April, 2019: The Managing Trustee of Pushpanjali Trust and a few caregivers of persons with mental illness and Dr B K Waraich, met with H.E. the Governor of Punjab & Administrator of U.T. Chandigarh in Punjab Raj Bhavan, and pleaded the case for setting up Group Homes in UT Chandigarh at the earliest. Copies of the original representation, Draft Policy, and the High Court order were handed over to the Governor. Some parents and Dr Waraich also personally handed in their representations to the Governor.
- 11th April, 2019: The Managing Trustee of Pushpanjali Trust and a few caregivers of persons with mental illness and Dr B K Waraich met with the Adviser, UT Chandigarh, in his office. We had a long discussion on the different models of Group Homes operating world-wide, as also the practical aspects of running a Group Home. A few parents and Dr Waraich personally handed in their representations to the Adviser. The Adviser asked us to do a 'needs assessment' study for UT Chandigarh and report the findings to him.

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- 8th May, 2019: The Managing Trustee of Pushpanjali Trust met with the Home Secretary for UT Chandigarh in his office and discussed things in detail. The Home Secretary, who also holds the charge of 'Health', understood the different aspects and challenges of policy formulation, and underscored the need for an urgent meeting of all the different stakeholders – departments of Health, Finance, Social Welfare and caregivers of persons with mental illness.
 - 11th July, 2019: A meeting was held in the UT Adviser's office, attended by some top officials of the concerned departments of UT Administration (Health, Social Welfare, Engineering, and Planning). The Managing Trustee of Pushpanjali Trust was invited for this meeting and was asked to submit a list of potential applicants for Group Homes. [The list was duly submitted on 23rd July, 2019]
 - 10th September, 2019: A meeting was held under the chairmanship of Secretary, Social Welfare, UT Chandigarh, attended by some officials of Municipal Corporation and other departments, and the Managing Trustee of Pushpanjali Trust.

Note: For the benefit and ease of UT Chandigarh Administration, the following documents were prepared and circulated by Pushpanjali Trust:

- Estimated number of persons with severe mental illness in UT Chandigarh, some of whom will need the facilities of Group Homes over time.
- A thoroughly revised Draft Policy taking into consideration Chandigarh's Master Plan and the realistic need for Group Homes.
- Annexure, explaining the stages of Treatment and Rehabilitation.

The following meetings were held with officials of Haryana

- The Managing Trustee of Pushpanjali Trust attended a meeting in the office of Dr Vishwaneet Singh, State Program Officer (Mental Health and Drug De-Addiction), O/o Director General Health Services, Panchkula, Haryana, on 5th July, 2019. The meeting was called to discuss our official representation and draft policy sent earlier to the Haryana government. Pushpanjali Trust was asked to submit some more details regarding services offered in Group Homes, which we did shortly thereafter.

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- This was followed by a follow-up meeting to discuss the Draft Policy on Assisted Community Living of Persons with Mental Illness on 16th July, 2019 in the office of Dr. Aditya Kaushik, Nodal Officer from Department of Social Justice, Haryana.

Needs Assessment for Group Homes in Chandigarh

1. Signature Campaign: As requested by The Adviser, UT Chandigarh, during the meeting in April, 2019, a signature campaign was initiated to assess the realistic need for long term Group Homes in Chandigarh. A massive drive was launched and we tried to contact as many families as we possibly could, taking help from the mental health professionals in government hospitals and in private practice. During April - July, 2019, a list of over 70 potential beneficiaries was compiled, and finally submitted to the Director, Social Welfare, UT Chandigarh.

2. Survey: Knowing the limitations of signature campaign (in terms of identifying all potential beneficiaries), we carried out an extensive survey among mental health professionals in Chandigarh Tricity during Sep-Oct 2019. A total of 31 Psychiatrists (from government hospitals and in private practice) participated in an online survey to assess the need for different rehabilitation services in Chandigarh. We found that there is a great need for 1) Day Care and Vocational Centers, 2) Half-way home, and 3) Long-term Group Homes in Chandigarh. The Survey results were published in Chandigarh Tribune in December 2019.

PIL filed for the states of Punjab and Haryana

Since no tangible steps were taken to frame a policy on Group Homes by the states of Punjab and Haryana despite multiple requests and representations, Pushpanjali Trust filed a PIL (Public Interest Litigation) on 6th December, 2019 in the Punjab and Haryana High Court. The High Court vide CWP-PIL-252 of 2019 issued directions to the states of Punjab and Haryana to frame a policy on Group Homes within three months from the receipt of a certified copy of the order.

Contempt Petition filed against UT Chandigarh Administration

Despite our best and sincere efforts, UT Chandigarh Administration did not take any concrete steps (beyond a few meetings) for setting up Group Homes in Chandigarh. After waiting for several months beyond the deadline given to the UT Chandigarh Administration by the High Court, with a heavy heart we filed a Contempt petition in December 2019. The Hon'ble Court was pleased to issue notice of motion in the main contempt petition vide order dated 19th December, 2019. Thereafter, the affidavit was filed by the respondents and a counter-affidavit in response was also duly filed on behalf of the petitioners. The final order is awaited. [Pushpanjali Trust is committed to help persons with mental disabilities get their rightful due].

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation and re-integration of adults with mental disabilities in society is of fundamental importance to the Pushpanjali Trust. Instead of providing rehabilitation services directly, our approach is one of enabling and empowering people so they could help themselves.

Peer Support Groups for PMI and their Caregivers

We expanded our activities initiated last year.

- **Peer Support for PMIs**

We found that many adults with mental illnesses are languishing in their homes. Even though they are taking regular treatment, they suffer from loneliness and meaninglessness. The vocational and volunteer opportunities are extremely limited and there is massive stigma. We found that connecting such persons with each other had a therapeutic effect on their mental and physical health. They found empathy, camaraderie and mutual support. From fifteen individuals last year, the support group has now grown to twenty individuals (men and women). Slowly, they are becoming comfortable with each other in their peer groups.

- **Caregivers support network**

Just as persons with mental disabilities are dealing with their challenges and loneliness, so are their caregivers/ guardians. The caregivers continue

experiencing fatigue, burnout in addition to loneliness and stigma. Having a support group of caregivers had a similar therapeutic effect on them - they found empathy, camaraderie and mutual support. They realized they are not alone; even more, they can lend support to each other, and receive help when the chips are down. The support group has now grown to include twenty-five caregivers.

Photo Gallery



**Various Meetings with
PMIs, Caregivers
and Professionals**



Networking with mental health professionals

We have expanded our network of sympathetic and eminent mental health professionals who could mentor us and become our valuable partners in advocating for community living of persons with mental illnesses. Two eminent professionals from Bangalore became our valuable guides and mentors this year:

Dr Kalyana Sundaram, Senior Psychiatrist, Bangalore. His passion and hard work over 30+ years has enabled Richmond Fellowship Society to become a leading professional NGO in India providing quality care and rehabilitation services for persons with mental illnesses.

Ms Usha Srinath, Clinical Psychologist, Athma Shakti Vidyalaya, Bangalore. Much loved and respected by colleagues and clients, Ms Usha has over 40 years of experience in psychosocial rehabilitation.



**Gurpreet Singh (PSW) with
Dr Lata Hemchand, CEO RFS,
& Dr Kalyana Sundaram
during his training at RFS,
Bangalore.**

**Gurpreet Singh (PSW)
with Usha Srinath and
ASV staff, during his
training at ASV,
Bangalore.**



My Training Experiences

Gurpreet Singh
Psychiatric Social Worker
Pushpanjali Trust



After completion of my M.Phil in Psychiatric Social Work from Govt. Medical College and Hospital, Chandigarh in August 2019, I joined Pushpanjali Trust. I underwent five months' intensive training in psycho-social rehabilitation in Bangalore with two well-known NGOs – RFS and ASV.

In Richmond Fellowship Society (RFS), Bangalore, close interactions with professional staff and clients/ residents provided a rich learning experience. As part of my training, I was posted in their Half-way Home 'Asha', Long-term Group Home, 'Jyothi' and Vocational Center, 'Chetana'. I was assigned regular duties along with the staff members so I could get maximum exposure. Therapeutic community principles were applied in day-to-day interventions with the clients/ residents in RFS. Additionally, good reading material and case studies helped me in my learning. Professional standards and ethics were the core features of the overall rehabilitation model of RFS. I completed 8 weeks of training at RFS.

Athma Shakti Vidyalaya (ASV), Bangalore, enhanced my knowledge about therapeutic communities and polished my counseling skills. Here I worked closely with the senior therapists of the organization. Since I lived on campus of these organizations, I was able to interact a lot with the residents and staff. That helped me understand their issues closely. I could discuss with the senior therapists about counseling methods and other possible solutions. I also learnt about Transactional Analysis (TA), a type of "psychology" that examines relationships and interactions. Most of the rehabilitation in ASV is done by using the TA approach. My total training period in ASV was 12 weeks.

I also spent one week with Mental Health Action Trust (MHAT) in Kerala. I had an excellent exposure to their community mental health program. I visited a few rural areas where MHAT teams visit on a weekly basis to provide basic psychiatric treatment. I learnt how the local communities and NGOs could provide good mental health care facilities to the underserved. I returned to Chandigarh in March 2020.

Media Outreach : Tribune Articles

New law, but slow progress on mental health

We finally have a strong and empowering legislation for mental healthcare, but whether it actually translates into an effective mental health ecosystem remains to be seen

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Aditya Vikram Rametra

Persons with disabilities generally have a hard time in our society; persons with mental illness particularly face a lot of discrimination and apathy. A large part of this discrimination stems from ignorance; we don't understand mental illness and therefore are unable to

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/chandigarh/new-law-but-slow-progress-on-mental-health-14073>

The vital need for support services

For persons with mental illness living in half-way homes, group homes, or own homes, there is a need to keep them meaningfully occupied

SHARE ARTICLE

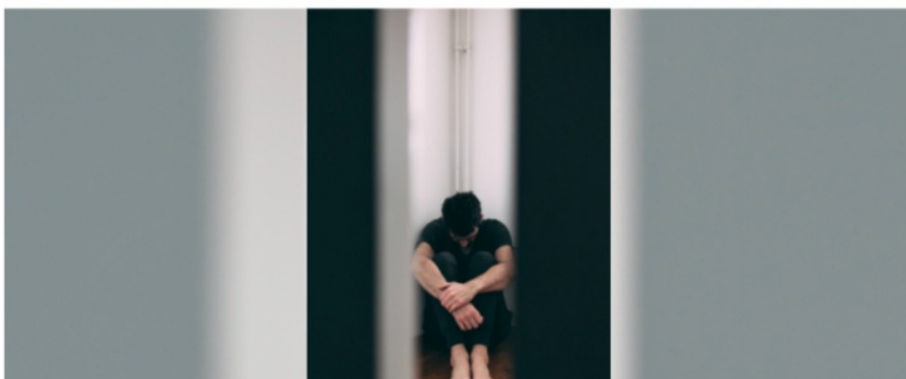
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Aditya Vikram Rametra

this write-up focuses on the need for support services for persons with severe and chronic mental illness such as schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorder and other psychosis. There are broadly three stages of treatment and long-term rehabilitation:

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/chandigarh/the-vital-need-for-support-services-17264>

Testimonials

When I am alone, I feel like talking to somebody with whom I can share my thoughts, my problems and mental health issues. Gurpreet and Aditya are the people who are available to talk to me. Gurpreet visits my home whenever I request him to do so, and sometimes I am in the mood to discuss my issues. Aditya takes me for a walk sometimes to the Sukhna Lake, which I enjoy very much. They invite me for the weekly 'social musical evenings' organized by Pushpanjali Trust in Fragrance Garden, Chandigarh. Here we enjoy the live music and later have a cup of tea, along with good conversation. I feel bad as I don't go there sometimes due to my low mood cycles, but I try to go there whenever I can.

Gurpreet has taught me how to use a Smartphone from the very basics. Now I am able to attend the online meetings of my 'Buddha circle', as well as the webinars of Pushpanjali Trust organized fortnightly for persons with mental illness. I am very keen that Pushpanjali Trust succeeds in its campaign for Group Homes in Chandigarh. I have shared about the campaign with my friends and relatives. I want that such facilities should be available to persons with mental illness everywhere in the country. I would like to help more in this campaign. I want to thank Pushpanjali Trust and I would try to give my best to improve myself.

A Service User

Pushpanjali Trust organizes online meetings through Google Meet or Zoom, which I find very useful. We basically discuss our day to day issues and some interesting topics. I feel relaxed after sharing my thoughts. They also organize musical evenings at Fragrance garden, Sector 36, which I enjoy. Gurpreet Sir (Psychiatric Social Worker) provides us support anytime we need. He is always available for us and whenever we want to talk, he listens to our problems. In future I want to engage myself with such like good social groups.

Another Service User

[Many service users (persons with mental illnesses) are comfortable sharing their experiences but do not wish to reveal their names. We respect their choice.]

Testimonials

I have been associated with Pushpanjali Trust and its various activities for the last 2 years. I have been working for the well-being and humane living conditions of persons with mental illnesses over the last few years and my association with Pushpanjali Trust was based on these grounds. I have participated in several of the mental health caregiving support related activities organized by Pushpanjali Trust.

I am also aware that Pushpanjali Trust has been spearheading local efforts by several parents, care givers, mental health professionals and social workers for setting up of suitable Sheltered Accommodations for persons with mental illnesses in Chandigarh, The City Beautiful. I strongly believe that our city would be more beautiful and radiant if all residents including the disabled persons lead a safe, healthy and happy life. I would like to end my statement with sincere regards and best wishes for all the success to Pushpanjali Trust in their future endeavors.

A. Das
Caregiver



Financial Statement for 2019-20

	Amount in Rs. (Lakhs)
Assets	
Fixed Assets	--
Loans Advances & Deposits	0.22
Cash & Cash Equivalents	50.93
	51.16
Liabilities	
Funds & Reserve	30.56
Loans & Deposits Unexpended Grants Creditors & Accruals	20.60
	51.16

	Amount in Rs. (Lakhs)
INCOME	
Donations	--
Other income	2.29
	2.29
EXPENDITURE	
Direct Program Activity	1.79
Administration	0.19
	1.98
Surplus for the year	0.31

Contact Details

Head office:	H.No. 208, Sector 36-A, Chandigarh 160036
Email Address:	pushpanjalitrust43@gmail.com
Website:	Pushpanjalitrust.in
Our Bankers:	Axis Bank, Sec-35, Chandigarh IndusInd Bank, Sec-35, Chandigarh
Trust Registration No:	DEL - PR26755 - 27122017 (under The Indian Trusts Act)
Tax benefits:	Donations made to the Trust are exempt under Section 80G (5)(vi) of the Income Tax Act, vide ref. No. DELHI/80G/2018-19/A/10092



Pushpanjali Trust

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