

## Thinking Aloud Allowed

It has been a bumper monsoon – starting early and finishing just last week in early October. We have a bumper Monsoon newsletter here with updates on our work in Dehradun and the Yamuna valley to promote mental health and support stronger mental health systems. Our prison programme, support to the Disabled people’s organisations are really thriving and several opportunities for staff training have really given us energy to extend our work in communities.



Thank you for your interest and funding that supports this Burans work to continue. Here’s to sun shine and active and mentally healthy communities through the autumn season.

– **Kaaren (on behalf of the wider Burans team).**

## Empowerment Through Training: Voices of DPO Members

The journey of Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs) in Naugaon reflects how collective learning and training can bring changes to mindsets, and communities.

Vinita, Vice President of the DPO, recalls that earlier members lived isolated lives, cut off from new information and opportunities. “We had no interaction, no knowledge updates. But after gathering and forming our group (Kamleshwar Divyang Society) we began to feel we understood more and had strength to work together,” she shared. Naresh, another member, emphasized the shift in identity. “Before, we did not know about disabilities, our rights, or government schemes. We lacked confidence.



*Computer practice by DPO members*

Training gave us knowledge and skills, helping us realize that we are not beneficiaries but partners in change.” With this new understanding, the group has opened an office in Naugaon to serve persons with disabilities (PWDs) and marginalized people. Darshan highlighted the opportunities of community and connection: “I like that we not only learn, but also share, eat, and play together during training. It gives us a very nice feeling.”



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For Binita, using a laptop at one time seemed impossible. "It was like a white elephant for us. But we practiced and learned how to switch it on, use the mouse, and explore options. This gave us confidence to try more. But we still have lots to learn."

The President Jaipur Lal of the DPO added, "Earlier, we were unsure how to live our lives. Now we know our rights, how to access services, write applications, and approach officials. After documentation training, we applied to the Chief Minister's fund, and 11 members received ₹5,000 each. This success motivated us further." Today, Naugaon DPO members see themselves as active contributors to society. Training has become a space for learning, sharing, and moving forward. With support by Burans we hope that people with disabilities can increasingly know dignity and hope.



**Written by Jeet Bahadur**  
(Team Leader, Yamuna Valley)

## NIMHANS Hosts 3-Day Maternal Mental Health Training



We recently had the opportunity to participate in a three-day training program on Maternal Mental Health at Torchbearers in August. The session was led by NIMHANS, Bengaluru by Dr. Prabha, Dr. Sunder Naag, and Dr Rabab. The core reason for the training was to equip us with the knowledge and tools needed to support mothers during the critical perinatal period. Pregnancy isn't just a physical journey; it's a phase with mental hurdles, and we need to be ready to address them. The main goal was to focus on the prevention of mental illness and its related causes. The workshop emphasised the importance of the first 1000 days of a child from conception which is why our program is important.

The workshop had interactive sessions, for example, we saw informative video clips and engaged in deep discussions of specific symptoms of postpartum depression, like depression, worry, loneliness and lack of sleep. We also spent our time exploring several health services and resources available for support. There are a variety of services from basic medical care to counselling. We learned ways to raise awareness both in the community and within the family by making use of video clips in the waiting areas of health centers and hospitals and displaying helpline numbers. One of the most helpful discussions was on domestic violence and a practical way to support women to access services- by sharing helpline numbers like: 1091, 181, and 1098. Knowing about these resources can be life-saving.

We also learned about practical support structures like the One Stop Centres, which provide temporary shelter for women in need. Additionally, a session was dedicated to understanding the CLF (Cluster, Level, Foundation) structure, particularly how the principle fund operates and receives scheme-based funding.

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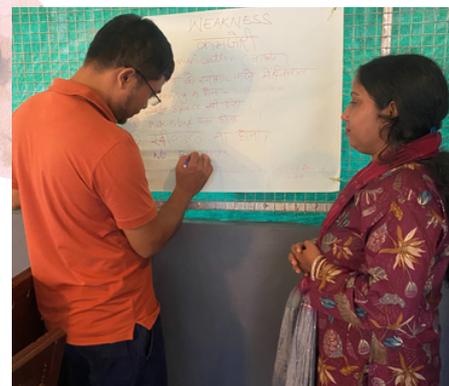


The training stressed that maternal mental health is important for the community. By improving the mental health of mothers, we directly improve the mental health of children and the entire family. The training stressed that maternal mental health is important for the community. By improving the mental health of mothers, we directly improve the mental health of children and the entire family. The biggest takeaway is the urgent need for more awareness in the community about the resources and support available. We are planning to develop a group intervention with mothers to share our knowledge and skills with pregnant and young mothers in our communities.



**Written by Geeta Shakya**  
(Community Health Staff, Selaqui)

## Personal Reflection on Learning from the Workshop



Attending the two-day half-yearly workshop in Rishikesh (3-4 Sept,'25) was a very enriching experience for me. The sessions helped me both personally and professionally. During a training session on trauma, I gained a deeper understanding of what trauma means, its different forms, and the ways it impacts individuals. The interactive teaching approach, through role plays, helped me relate these concepts to real life and also think about how I can be more sensitive in supporting people facing such challenges.

The tree activity facilitated by Jeet gave me a new perspective on visualizing strengths and resources. By mapping roots, trunk, and fruits, I learned how to connect community resources with team strengths and how these can lead to positive outcomes. This activity encouraged me to reflect on my own contributions and recognize how collective effort can bring meaningful change.

In the session on challenges, I was able to openly reflect on my personal struggles, the difficulties we face as a team, and the barriers coming from the community. Through the sharing of best practices, I understood how to build on what is already working well in the community and within our teams. Overall, the workshop helped me develop greater self-awareness, enhanced my problem-solving approach, and strengthened my belief in working together as a team to create impact.



**Written by Pallavi Nautiyal**  
(Community Health Staff, Purola)

## Prison Mental Health Support through Sports

In June 2025, Herbertpur Christian Hospital (Project Burans), along with District Jail Dehradun, organized a one-week program focused on sports and mental health. What made this event special was that the inmates themselves had requested it. The activities were not only fun but also helped support their mental and emotional well-being. The prison and Burans have worked together over the last 3 years in Suddhowala prison on mental health awareness using the Nae Roshani manual (developed through Burans). Our main objective is to promote mental wellbeing and support problem solving.



We also conduct weekly one to one active listening sessions with inmates. They feel relaxed and vent their feelings. The program included many games like volleyball, badminton, carrom, chess, ludo, spoon races, and kangaroo races. More than 200 men and 60 women inmates took part with great excitement. In the end, 45 finalists were given small gifts to encourage and motivate them. Alongside the games, Nae Roshni Module mental health sessions were held.

These sessions helped many inmates feel better. Three men shared how they had felt lonely, anxious, and sad when they first came to prison, but through group talks and one-on-one listening, they started feeling more hopeful and positive.

Through the Nae Roshni and ALPS sessions, we found that many inmates were feeling deeply sad and stressed due to their legal cases and concerns about their families. One inmate even sang a song to express his feelings, which touched everyone's heart. The DIG and Jail Superintendent praised the program and thanked Project Burans for their ongoing support. They also gave the opportunity to this woman to sing a devotional song through a radio that is played across all the barracks. They said such efforts help make the prison a better and more nonviolent place. This program improved the mental and physical health of the inmates and helped build teamwork, discipline, and hope.



**Written by Pooja Baluni**  
(Project Officer, Dehradun)

## Suicide Prevention Day in Dehradun and Selaqui

On September 10, 2025, Project Burans organized a Suicide Prevention Day in select areas of Dehradun and Selaqui due to rising suicide rates observed in these regions. The awareness program saw participation from children, youth, and the elderly.

The event was engaging using drama, role-play, storytelling, and demonstration—to explain the causes of suicide. These activities allowed people to connect with the content and openly share their emotions. Participants revealed that when they faced too much pressure from family or school studies (a common sentiment), they felt like running away from home or committing suicide.



Young people described common stressors that make them think about self-harm include:

- Excessive study pressure
- Daily family quarrels
- Betrayal in a romantic relationship
- Family refusal to accept a love marriage

Youth participants themselves offered practical advice for coping with suicidal thoughts as talking to someone, seek help from a counsellor and try to follow healthy living and activity. The program concluded with important recommendations from different age groups:

- Children's Suggestion: we should run awareness programs in every region.
- Youth's Suggestion: families of individuals who have attempted or completed suicide should be intensive counselling and support.



**Written by Brahmi Kaur**  
(Community Health Staff, Dehradun)