

April 2026

Thinking Aloud Allowed

Welcome to a pink Burans bulletin and our Summer edition for 2026! We are happy to celebrate International Women's day with this issue that profiles seven of the women in the Burans team. We interviewed them and asked them about what keeps them going, who inspires them and how they keep themselves mentally well. This month we have also started a new pilot programme which has a focus on maternal mental health. We have collaborated with NIMHANS (the State institution for mental health and neurological sciences in Bengaluru) and had support from several friends who work in maternal health to develop a new intervention titled Maa ka Mann.

As we reached the end of the financial year we finalised our Nae Disha (youth resilience) group interventions. We were delighted that we have funding committed for our current work plans for 2026 - 27 in Dehradun and Yamuna valley - but we're keen to partner with new funders in the coming year to continue working for mental health in Uttarakhand and beyond. Read on!

The Little Joys of Women Who Care and Women Who Lead

This time we are excited to bring a special edition of A sneak peak of our community staff's lives outside and around work. We had interviewed 9 staff who are working for mental health in Dehradun and Yamuna Valley. The interviews were a fun time and they are excited to share this with the well wishers of Burans.



1. How does your team describe you?

In the Dehradun team, Mamta Pandey is described as a 'caring mother with many arms'- she does a lot for people around her. Pooja Rani is known for her maturity and self-awareness, while Pooja Baluni stands out for her passion for growth and deep understanding.

In Naugaon, Samita is a quick learner, Yamnotri an empathetic listener, and Minika a reliable friend.

In Purola, Rekha ji is a positive person, Asha is a keen learner and Poonam is described as a supportive colleague.

2. What are your hobbies outside of work?

Beyond their professional roles, these women described the everyday as a source of joy.

Pooja Rani loves to go back to her family and catch up with the daily happenings,

Mamta enjoys her *gupshup* (joy of talking) time with neighbours and Pooja Baluni loves shopping – each finds her own way to recharge.

In the hills, hobbies are deeply rooted in life – Yamnotri finds peace in farming, Samita in cooking, and Minika in exploring new places. Poonam and Asha loves to go on outings with their families and Rekha Ji loves to chat with people in her community.

3. Why We Chose This Work

"I love helping people," says Pooja Baluni and Poonam.

Mamta shares that her energy comes from people, while Pooja Rani takes pride in being someone her community can turn to saying: "If someone is struggling mentally, my name comes first to them and they say - *Pooja ko Bulaaoo.*"



Samita was inspired by her firsthand experience of recovery of one of her clients and that motivated her to keep working in MH. For Yamunotri it was her 'getaway' plan to get out of house and explore new experiences and places. Minika likes to listen to stories of different people. Rekha was inspired by her role as a caregiver to her husband to support people in tough times.

Monthly Update



Pulse Conclave 2026

An exciting opportunity was our invitation to Pulse Conclave 2026(Event in Mumbai) which was a Maharashtra state government forum that was profiling innovative work to promote health in rural locations across India.



Maternal Mental Health Training

We have successfully completed module development and training for our Maternal Mental Health.



Let's collaborate:

Join us in strengthening community mental health. We're looking to partner with organizations, policymakers, and professionals who share our vision for systemic change.

Email: info@burans.org
Website: burans.org

4. Women Who Inspire Us...

Mamta draws strength from Mother Teresa's service, while Pooja Rani admires Lata Mangeshkar's (an iconic figure in the history of Indian music, also known as 'Nightingale of India') for her lasting legacy.

Samita is inspired by her project officer Krishna who travels independently. Yamunotri looks up to one of the people with psychosocial disability she works with, who has fought her battles successfully towards recovery. Minika and Poonam are inspired by their mothers who taught them many things and are their biggest supporters. Rekha looks up to her neighbour who is a 'friend in need'.



5. Moments We're Proud Of...

Their proudest moments were described as lives changed rather than externally recognised awards. Mamta recalls helping children without documents get into school and told us today, those families still update her out of gratefulness. Pooja Rani felt proud being able to take training in the institution for homeless women, **Nariniketan** when she spoke in front of a lot of qualified people. For Pooja Baluni, it was holding everything together during a challenging time and successfully completing parenting programs.

Samita is proud of women who struggled with mental health difficulties but later became ambassadors for mental health. Yamunotri is proud of women in the self-help group who can speak confidently. Others speak of recovery – one person improving, one family finding hope – "Even 1 out of 100 is enough," says Minika.

Poonam is proud of being able to serve people with disabilities and making a big difference in their lives. Asha is proud of being appreciated in her community for the result of her work though they had doubts at first. Rekha is proud to see her husband recovering from his mental illness and supporting her family now.

6. If We Shared a Meal...

Mamta Pandey and Samita, would love to sit with person with mental health difficulties who struggles for food, simply to share a meal with them.

Pooja Rani wants to have a meal with her aunt (*Chotti Bua*) who has struggled in life and has lost her husband recently. Rekha also wanted to have a meal with her *Bua* (Dad's sister) because she makes those tasty *pakor*as (fritters) during rainy evenings.



Pooja Baluni wants to have lunch with her mom. Yamunotri wants to have a meal with her mother in law and Poonam enjoys lunch with her team. Asha wants to have meal with her neighbour because she is supportive and a good listener.

7. A small daily habit that helps you to stay balanced.

Mamta Pandey needs her alone time to recharge. Pooja Rani loves to stick to her daily schedule. Pooja Baluni loves to talk and hear to her son.

Samita delegates work when she is overwhelmed, Yamunotri talks to her sister to keep up.

Poonam hopes and finds goodness in all situations. Asha cries when she has to face difficult times. Rekha shares with her husband and maybe also distract herself by using her phone.



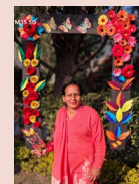
8. What Makes Us Smile

Pooja Baluni, Mamta Pandey, Samita and Poonam says that their team brightens up their day. Yamunotri says she smiles at the thought of being privileged to go to work. Asha recalls funny things that happened throughout the day and smile thinking of it. Rekha laughs at her own mistakes and bluffs.

Meet the 9 women of our Team



Asha
(Community Health Volunteer in Purola)



Mamta Pandey
(Community Health Worker in Dehradun)



Minika
(Community Health Worker in Naugaon)



Pooja
(Project Field Officer in Dehradun)



Pooja Rani
(Community Health Worker in Dehradun)



Poonam
(Community Health Worker in Purola)



Rekha
(Community Health Worker in Purola)



Samita
(Community Health Volunteer in Naugaon)



Yamunotri
(Community Health Volunteer in Naugaon)