

# Annual Report: 2021 to 2022

## Aman Public Charitable Trust, New Delhi



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## An Overview

After its founding in year 2001, AMAN TRUST has been striving to empower grassroots communities through proactive role of civil society envisioning to mitigate communal conflict and its effects following ahimsa and samrastha (non-violence and harmony). With an objective of building a just society, AMAN seeks to identify and defuse sources of social discontent. Its projects create social conditions aiming to promote peace in marginalized communities exposed to violence.

Since a decade, AMAN has been addressing sensitive issues focusing on youth for social change to promote justice, equality, and harmony in marginalized communities through community-based People's Forum. Education, gender justice and health to stimulate socio-cultural transformation of marginalized communities in Uttar Pradesh are the key domain of AMAN's projects. Adhering to its commitment to gender justice and inclusivity, AMAN facilitated capacity development workshops, trainings, cultural events, and community dialogues especially benefiting young girls and women, to safeguard their rights. AMAN offered relief aid services to individuals and families at risk during continued Covid19 pandemic. To assess the situation of the waning handloom weaving industry, a study was conducted with the traditional handloom weavers' families in Barabanki district of Uttar Pradesh state. The target families have been in the unorganized weaving industry over 300 years and are at risk of collapsing due to greater dependency on power looms and government taxes.

Considering the demand of a new digitalized era, AMAN continued to broadcast important information on its official website following organization's communication strategy thereby maintaining transparency with its stakeholders and donors. Assessing programmes' strategy, follow-up meetings with the partner organization and regular board meetings are highlights of administrative initiatives that enhanced programme relevance. Seven staffs from the core programme teams were offered training opportunities for knowledge enhancement on- the Constitution of India, laws to protect citizen's and human rights. Besides, staffs' participation in 'Jeevan Vidya' workshop, sensitized AMAN's programmes on balancing between idealism and realism in the path to realising constitutional rights.

AMAN acknowledges the vital role of youth in building of a just and compassionate society in present times. Thus, it promotes inclusion of youth as leaders for development of a peaceful and harmonious societies where the constitutional rights are realised for a dignified living.

## Our Work

### Education



Ten project volunteers efforted regularly to ensure making quality education accessible to children in the marginalized community. In the backdrop of pandemic, important issues such as- high school dropout cases, increasing child labour among grassroot communities, distress among school teachers and students, and an increasing percentage of forced child marriage were addressed through various educational projects.

Under the **Apna Taleem Ghar** program, arts and craft co-curricular workshop was organized for school children who were unable to attend school during pandemic lockdown and were bound to attend online classes for long hours. The workshop was participated by about 100 children who were helped to reduce their screen time and develop a mentally healthy lifestyle. Besides the workshop, a 3-days long online counselling session was conducted for school children by their teachers from 15 local schools in Faizabad-Ayodhya. The workshop was followed by measures to check distress and level of depression among children; appropriate action plan was worked out which included management of e-learning hours during pandemic by the parents. About 40 parents directly participated in the workshop.



**Pustak Yatra**, a unique initiative for children living in rural region was organized to make learning accessible at their doorstep. Under the programme, each month a children's book fair was organized in three rural communities following the Covid19 prevention protocols. Total 40 book fairs were organized by Pustak Yatra participated by about 2000 children. Each book fair offered them the opportunity of creative educational and co-curricular learning especially during absence of classroom teaching during Covid19 pandemic. The children were also able to share their stories and experience among each other in a safe environment.





A **Library Corner** is created at all the centres of the forum which provides books to the forum mentors and community volunteers for enhancing their capacity. They also use the library resources to connect the community's youth. A primary book toolkit supported by Parag Sanstha was installed at 3-centres of the Forum. The toolkits enabled children's learning through pictures and stories on history and human values.

To respond to digital deprivation created by the pandemic **Technical Labs** were installed in 10 centres of the forum in partnership with the Digital Education Foundation (DEF). The labs ensured continued learning for underprivileged adolescents and youth in rural regions of Faizabad who were unable to attend formal school classes for a prolonged period during the Covid-19 pandemic. Besides, the labs were instrumental in addressing the increasing mental stress and social vulnerability created by digital deprivation among them. Total 14 digital learning tablets were distributed at each of the 10 centres of forum followed by a technical training that enabled adolescents and youth from the community to access e-learning. The Technical Labs were also useful for community's youth who needed to fill various online forms for education or employment purposes. The Technical Lab resources are being managed by 10 adolescent lead volunteers from the community.



Furthermore, each of the Youth Resource Centre of the Forum were equipped with 5 computers and a printer making digital devices accessible to the children and adolescents of the community for e-learning assistance.



## Youth & Community Building



AMAN continued to engage with the adolescents and youth from the grassroots communities to end gender discrimination through the **Samanta Ke Sathi (Comrades of Equality)** forum. The forum used creative methods like – sports, radio podcasts, storytelling, film screenings, and community dialogue sessions to prepare young males for a gender inclusive society. The adolescent boys and male youth are better aware of the importance of women in a healthy society that rises above patriarchal ethos.

The forum played a crucial role in unifying youth energy for society building especially in the absence of regular classroom learning on account of the Covid19 pandemic.



About 40 youths actively participated in various programs initiated by the forum which included- group meetings with like-minded peers to discuss community's needs; health, education, and life skills assistance in 10 nearby villages, awareness meetings with women and adolescent girls in the community to end violence against women, ensuring justice to the victim-survivor of gender-based violence, and offering safe space for mutual learning and sharing for youth during the Covid19

lockdown.

The **Samvidhan Mitra Mandali** generated awareness on the Indian Constitution. The group of 10 core team volunteers and 20 community volunteers organized 9 weekly sessions highlighting the values of Constitution of India that inspires the functioning of Indian democracy and its leaders. The issue of social inequality was addressed through movie screening. Experiential learning was encouraged by enabling youth to share their life examples that reflects observation or violation of Indian constitutional values. Further, the youth learnt the art of all-inclusive decision making and coexistence in a society. The 30-member team of the Mandali has planned to upscale their initiative by creating a youth parliament in two colleges and five school in their nearby region.





To continue preservation of multi-cultural heritage and promoting understanding on the importance of historical structures **Heritage walks** were organized with about 500 youths. The site visits included - Tikri forest, Tomb of Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula (Gulabbadi), Anees Chakbas Library, Mani Parbat, Chowk (4 dare), Ayodhya. The walk encouraged youth's interest in local heritage and cultural diversity beside enabling their knowledge on the geography of their city.

The **Karyakarta Sammelan** invited participation of all youth forum members and project associates from the grassroots. This worker's conference facilitated sharing of experiences and feedbacks among the project workers and volunteers beside viewing their challenges in the journey from self to the community. Cultural and musical performance were presented during the conference. A detailed review discussion on the forum's past works and information on the future programs were shared including presentation by the youth groups on programs led by them. The forum successfully encouraged youths in leadership role for the upliftment of their society. The Forum strives to establish civic duties and values as enshrined by the Indian constitution through awareness generating discussions with the young volunteers. The Sammelan is crucial in affirming the role of community workers, especially youth, who strived to break societal stereotypes and addressed issues of cultural and gender discrimination through street play and community awareness campaigns.



The two-month long **Togetherness Table** program brought together youths to sensitize them on self-awareness through innovative activities focusing on the principles of – Ownership, Learning, and Expression. Target school, college and community youths from Faizabad district shared their personal struggles of mental breakdown and their coping mechanism.



About 120 youths participated in these sessions some of whom were able to accept

their true identities and embraced their sexuality. The youth were offered a safe group to share their fears and inhibitions concerning their society. Through forum, youth counsellors organized 5-mental health sessions to create an inclusive platform for all-gender youth.

The 5<sup>th</sup> AMAN Trophy program was organized in memory of the Late Riyaz Ahmad. Series of sports events were participated by 5 teams. About 500 youths and nearby school students visited the sports tournament and engaged variously during the whole event. The AMAN trophy encourages youth to learn about love and peace through sports tournaments.



## Health Awareness

The prolonged risky consequences of the Covid19 pandemic have exacerbated the psychosocial wellbeing of the youth. Thus, youth led **psychosocial support network** forum were established within the grassroot communities in the Faizabad district. The support network was managed by community's youth themselves who were offered training in barefoot counselling services. To redevelop resilience of distressed youth confined in rural regions, the youth forum offered online and telephonic counselling sessions. Awareness generation on the menstrual health



challenges faced by adolescent girls' during extended pandemic period were also taken up by the forum members. The forum successfully reached out to a large number of youths who were facilitated in building resilience to face the emerging societal conditions in the wake of Covid19. Free expression of distressing thoughts and feelings in a safe virtual space enabled

youth to experience catharsis and reignite hope for a better future.

The Mehdauna village community is heavily involved in BIDI (tobacco) production works causing harsh exposure of their children to tobacco. Due to the BIDI production units' multiple health issues are reported among children and women working in the tobacco fields; the adolescents are anaemic and underweight. Through AMAN supported M.M Lushkary school in **Mehdauna village**, Barun Bazar, Block- Milkipur, an **awareness fair** was organized to highlight the ill effects of tobacco production and consumption. The event successfully engaged 300 rural women and 200 school children.



As a result of grassroots advocacy, the head of the Mehdauna village distributed books to the school children and organized a week-long **health check-up camp** at the M.M Lushkary school. The health camp supported by the health department of Ayodhya, project forum members, and Mehdauna Village members helped diagnosing initial stages of illness caused by the tobacco production units. The event offered several creative sessions

and small awareness games concerning health and education domains. The visiting village members gained awareness on topics such as- following a healthy diet plan, organic farming, Right to Education Act, and tobacco related illnesses. Multiple entertaining games were organized at the camp site to attract participation of vulnerable villagers. The event recorded participation of 700 rural women, 360 Bidi production workers, and 400 adolescent girls and boys.

## Gender Responsiveness



The **Prerna Kishori Vikas Kendra** continued to operate in 6 centres managed by the community workers. The centres benefitted 300 adolescent girls through community-based sessions on health, arts, life and vocational skills.





The community youth activists offered life enhancing training sessions on basic use of computer, yoga for wellness, creating photo diaries, embroidery and henna art. Personality development sessions on importance of education and decision-making motivated the adolescent girls to adopt leadership abilities. Arts, songs and music were used to encourage adolescent girls to actively participate in decision makings related to their sociocultural wellbeing.

A **Writing Workshop** was organized to dialogue on the education of adolescent girls in Girls Government Inter College (GGIC), Gohaniyan. The event commemorated late Dr. Sunil Lata, the former headmistress of GGIC, Gohaniyan. The dialogue focused on the importance of girls' education especially in backdrop of indefinite shutting down of schools during pandemic that has caused high dropout rate among home bound girl children.

*'All the processes have been affected a lot during the Corona period, due to this the education of girls has also been affected. Online education cannot take place of classroom education, yet we have to keep trying to teach online. Girls studying in such times need to work harder to make a better future.'*  
 -Principal, GGIC, Gohaniyan

The session offered young girls an opportunity to showcase their talent by writing article the best of which will be published in 'Yuvaaniyan' a local magazine voicing youth. The adolescent girl participants were given certificates and medals that boosted their confidence in their abilities. As outcome of dialogue programme, a Girls Social Welfare Committee of 11 members will be formed to address challenges for girls' education.

Six month long **"Sahar Fellowship"** award to girls and women gave them opportunities to use



their talent for self-advancement. It enabled them to express their cause, establish their business, and enhance livelihood as well as leadership skills. The fellowship efforts to offer six months financial assistance to target set of women and girls so that they are able to fulfil their basic needs. The six-month support programme offers women and girls to fully focus on their skill advancement without worrying

about their basic survival. The fellowship applications were invited from the town of Faizabad, Ayodhya, and nearby rural areas. There were about 88 applicants in two batches who desired to secure the fellowship. The fellowship selected about 35 participants initially, 5 women in the 1<sup>st</sup>

phase and 9 women in the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase were selected for the fellowship. All these fellows are working under their own leadership in their community.

A **women's workshop** was organized inviting participation from women living in rural regions of Faizabad district. The workshop created a safe space for women to come together and express their dreams through creative writing which also encouraged them to follow their passion.



A **post card campaign** brought together school going girls to dialogue on their needs in school spaces. The campaign highlighted girl's expectation to enhance school spaces that enables friendly interactions among students and teachers, an environment that supports students' emotional wellbeing, and access to clean drinking water.

To facilitate women labour force **E-Shram Card Campaign** was organized with the support of community members who participate in forum activities along with the project volunteers. In three-months period, 1400 e-shram cards were generated to acknowledge the women domestic workers working across 500 houses in the Faizabad district. To protect them against exploitation, their mobile numbers were linked with their unique identity Aadhar card. Besides, their labour identity cards were printed and distributed to them. Further, community volunteers organized 30 awareness campaigns in 12 most vulnerable communities in a period of three-months.

To raise awareness on gender-based violence, 16-day long **campaign against GBV** was organized by the community volunteers who encouraged empowerment of the grassroot communities against GBV. The campaign reinstates the power of people to mobilize themselves to protect their rights and collectively address the challenges of inequalities and gender-based violence in the community. About 400 youths participated in the campaign and about 150 of them took an oath to raise their voice against any kind of violence in their community and would adopt the core of non-violence in their lives.

## Covid19 Relief Response

**‘Koi bhukha na rahe’ campaign**, an initiative to address poverty driven hunger was launched. It reached out to the families of daily wage workers who lost daily wage income due prolonged Covid19 pandemic in Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh state. Food security was offered by distribution of cooked meal kits. Additionally, to protect them from coronavirus, sanitation awareness drive was conducted in the following communities - Khalitola, Buchanganj, Chithariya, Ghosiana, 40 Chauthia.



**Sanitation and Hygiene campaign** facilitated distribution of 1000 soaps to 500 families in 5 communities. To protect vulnerable children, community volunteers sensitized 300 children the right way to wash their hands for protection against Covid19 infection. As a result, the vulnerable community was able to mitigate the effects of widespread deadly Covid19 cases.



**Covid19 vaccination** drive ensured protection of underprivileged persons in the most remote villages of Faizabad district. Survey of 95,000 people in 43 village-wards of Januara, Abusarai, and Masodha Public Health Centre (PHC) was conducted to learn about their vaccination status. In a period of 6 months, 320 people above 65 years of age were assisted to get vaccinated, and 32,000 people were given the first and second dose through the vaccination camp and with the help of community volunteers. Along with the Health Department, Ayodhya, about 125,000 people in remote locations were made aware and counselled about the usefulness of Covid19 vaccination.



**Education kit was distributed to 300 children** in 5 primary schools associated with organization's "peace education" initiative. As adolescent girls were identified to be dropping out of school due to prolonged shutting down of school during pandemic, storybooks were distributed among 50 adolescent girls to revive their interest in education. Counselling support was continuously offered to these children to uplift their interest in formal education in absence of classroom teaching during the pandemic.



Increased use of clothes during menstrual cycle was observed among girls during pandemic when access to sanitary pad dropped due to lack of supply in local market. Thus, under **Menstrual Health & Hygiene** initiative adolescent girls from 500 families were offered awareness support to maintain menstrual health. The women associated with project were mobilized to generate awareness on menstrual waste management. About 2000 pads were

distributed in the community which generated income for a women's group producing sanitary pads locally. Besides, 200 teenage girls were given additional sanitary kits in collaboration with Prerna Kishori Vikas Kendra to protect them from hazardous of poor feminine hygiene.