yugantar

Annual Report

2020-2021

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Yugantar - Annual Report 2020-21

Yugantar was founded as India's first feminist film collective in Bangalore in 1982 by friends and filmmakers Abha Bhaiya, Navroze Contractor, Deepa Dhanraj, and Meera Rao. Operating between 1980 and 1983, during a time of radical political transformation, Yugantar created four pioneering films together with existing or ensuing women's groups, including domestic workers in Pune (Molkarin, 1981), female factory workers in Nipani (Tambaku Chaakila Oob Ali / Tobacco Ember, 1982), Sri Shakhti Sanghatana, a feminist research and activist collective based in Hyderabad (Idhi Katha Matramena / Is This Just A Story?, 1983), and members of the Chipko movement (Sudesha, 1983).

Yugantar's films carved new and productive spaces for dialogue through friendships and alliances, and their vision participated in shaping a period imbued with immense energies for resistant cultural practices to expand political discourse. The significance of the group's films lies in their original collaborative practice before "participatory video work" or "community media" became familiar terms, and in being part of the Indian autonomous women's movement and radical left movements of the 1970s and 80s.

The work of Yugantar evolved and moved into the implementation of development projects in both rural and urban settings. Yugantar worked in rural areas in Bihar and Chhattisgarh in conflict resolution and in Rural Rajasthan documenting the realities of caste. In the urban setting, Yugantar has predominantly worked in Hyderabad's Old City engaging in project implementation including research, advocacy and outreach activities. Yugantar's engagement in Old City began working in skill development and gender with Mahila Sanatkar, a women's collective. Yugantar's programme 'Tightropes and Boot Straps,' studied the impact of prolonged violence on young Muslim men and women in conflict-prone neighbourhoods in Hyderabad. 'Small Voices, Small Victories' was a pioneering action research programme working to address the issues of Youth at risk of criminalisation of becoming rowdysheeters and to facilitate their rehabilitation into mainstream society – winning the ISABS Honours in applied behavioural science Institutional Practice Leadership.

Yugantar's vision is to play a role in creating a just and equitable India, inclusive of plural traditions, individual freedoms and diverse communities. And hence, in parallel to targeted funded programmes Yugantar's work includes the support of minorities in accessing their right, such work with the Transgender community, migrants, bonded labour and child labour.

Our funding is predominantly from grants from CSR foundations and institutions, our previous donors include, Ford Foundation, Action Aid, TATA Trusts, IDRC, Tech Mahindra Foundation and Ministry of Rural Development.

MEMBERS

Navroze Contractor
(President)
Cinematographer and documentary film maker

Tejaswini Madabhushi
(Secretary)
Feminist activist and Yugantar CEO

Sashi Kumar
(Treasurer)
Senior policy expert

Madan Mohan Rao
(Member)
Journalist and Ashoka Fellow

Dr. K. Lalita
(Member)
Author, feminist activist, researcher, and founder-coordinator of Anveshi Research Centre of Women Studies

Deepa Dhanraj
(Member)
Filmmaker and feminist activist

Dr. Vithal Rajan
(Member)
Development specialist and short-story writer

L. Ravi Chander
(Member)
Lawyer and journalist

ACHIEVEMENTS

Project title: YouRTI.in

Project Duration: 2018-present

Project Activities:

RTI is crucial to ensure public safety in times of health and other public crises. Thus, during the Covid-19 pandemic, we observed a rise in the number of requests related to the details of number of cases, testing information, and vaccine availability with the government. Yugantar published an online YouRTI newsletter in 2020, disseminating it to over 1000 people who are actively engaged with our website. We often update readers regarding interesting happenings around RTI requests and responses through our Facebook page. Among our future plans, we target to upgrade the website and create tools to simplify the process of RTI for common citizens. We also want to build traction at the all-India level to make YouRTI.in a transparency building and self-sustaining institution.

Project title: Covid relief work during first wave and supporting the Transgender Community, Migrant Workers and Daily Wage Labourers

Project Duration: April-June 2020

Project Activities:

Yugantar played an active role in educating the public about Covid-19 and helping the government in mitigating the spread of the virus during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. With the grant received from Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiative (APPI), Yugantar worked in 3 PHCs of Chandrayangutta area to provide relief to the people and support the Health Department and Government of Telangana in response to the first wave of Covid-19. We build a team of volunteers and helped PHCs with testing and spreading awareness about Covid in various localities of the Old City.

Yugantar was instrumental in supporting the trans community in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad through the distribution of ration kits, as the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown left them unable to work and they were excluded from the mainstream relief effort. Medical kits were provided to over a thousand transgender people. These kits were essential for building immunity as well as meeting their specific medical needs. Yugantar partnered with Amoomat Society to provide cooked food and dry ration to migrant workers and the poorest of the poor in Hyderabad city. A majority of the kits were provided to migrant families living in Hyderabad who migrated from Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa and Maharashtra. They were working as construction labour, or in hotels and eating joints, or as salespersons in cloth stores, shoe stores, etc. Some of the kits were also provided to single women, women-led families and lower income groups. Yugantar, along with Anveshi, conducted two workshops: the first workshop was on ‘Precautions for volunteers on the ground for COVID-19 relief’ and the second workshop was on ‘Setting up community quarantine centres’. Members from different organisations like Amanvedika, Trans equality, Asritha, SRD, Amoomat Society, and Domestic Workers Union attended.

Project title: Flood Relief Project

Project Duration: October 2020

Project Activities:

The heavy rains that hit Hyderabad on the 13th October devastated many parts of the city. The October monthly average rainfall (103.6mm) was surpassed when 192 mm of rain fell in two days, the highest rainfall for October recorded in Hyderabad since 1903 (India Meteorological Department). Hyderabad's Old City was one of the most badly affected areas, specifically the Chandrayangutta area. Following a breach of a water tank in Bandlaguda, several colonies in Chandrayangutta were inundated. In some areas, water levels were between six and eight feet.

Yugantar in partnership with APPI provided flood relief in Bandlaguda, Babanagar and Barkaas wards located in Chandrayangutta. When the rains hit, Yugantar already had 27 volunteers working in the area who gave immediate support to the community. Our volunteers worked actively with GHMC to rescue and evacuate people from flooded homes and low lying areas. We also worked in collaboration with other organisations in providing cooked food and water for the people relocated into government camps and stuck in flooded homes. The volunteers identified 14 colonies and 4,500 households affected. Out of these households, 900 to 1,000 have been most badly affected.

Ygantar provided immediate support to vulnerable families affected by the floods. The worst hit were migrants and low income groups with little to no savings. Basic rations were required to help bridge the gap while they try to get their lives back on track. Furthermore, Yugantar supported families with children to make sure they do not go hungry or get cold. For this reason a sufficient ration kit was distributed to those most in need. The ration kit not only provided basic food rations but soap, a cloth washing soap and toothbrushes and toothpaste. Blankets were provided given that all their belongings were wet. Given the imminent threat of disease such as malaria and dengue a large mosquito net was given to families to provide protection from mosquitoes at night. We collaborated with Goonj to arrange clothes and cooking utensils for the most badly affected families.

Project title: Covid-19 Health Project

Project Duration: May-September 2021

Project Activities:

Yugantar's second health grant from APPI funded this project, whose objective was to strengthen Primary Health Centres and support ASHA workers in fighting the second Covid wave. The project was conducted in area where there were multiple minority communities that were showing low levels of Covid-19 awareness and testing. Improving awareness about Covid-19 within the community with the assistance of community leaders and PHC staff was one aspect of this project. Bringing home the importance of conducting testing in preventing the spread of Covid-19 was another. Yugantar worked on improving access to and reducing stigma surrounding testing. Building on existing community relationships, Yugantar targeted 6 PHCs in the south zone of Hyderabad. The project had 24 volunteers, and conducted 27,954 tests. An ambulance facility and Covid-19 tele-consultation support were also set up.

Additionally, distribution of rations and medicine to minority communities was organised. Towards the tail-end of this project, the first few vaccination camps were also conducted.

THANK YOU

We wish to thank all the volunteers, doctors and community leaders for their support in enabling us to provide the necessary support to the Transgender community, migrant workers, and daily wage labourers during such a difficult time. Ranchana Mudraboyina, who made it possible to reach the transgender community who were in such great need of support.

Thank you to all frontline workers who put their lives on the line during this extremely tough year.

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