

NEWS IN FOCUS

Divine Onkar Mission



**SEE HOW
OUR ALUMNI
STUDENTS**
ARE MAKING A
CHANGE FOR
THE BETTER

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Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic in India

The Coronavirus pandemic in India has fast become a crisis which is having a devastating impact on essential services and basic human needs across the country including healthcare, education and at the most basic level - access to food and water.

Agriculture and unregulated services such as rickshaw drivers and small snack sellers are the primary occupations in a number of villages. The frequent lockdowns have disrupted supply chains and access to markets for the sale of goods; the income of rural households has therefore been severely impacted.

The DOM Team has continued to work tirelessly throughout the Pandemic to play their part in addressing many of these issues.

Onkariyan Youth

Onkariyan Youth

Some of our past students were approached by the founder, Mr. Tersam Lal to continue the work that he began.

The alumni took on the challenge with great enthusiasm and set up a group where they could continue practicing the principles and teachings they had learnt during their time at DOM. They have chosen to name their group as the Onkariyan Youth.

They have all worked hard and become successful in their own right. Using their own resources, they have planned and executed aid with great care and attention. The group continues to grow and flourish, as more and more ex-students are coming on board. They are sharing ideas for future ventures in providing sustainable support to those most in need.

Chandrapura Bokaro

Ravi Mali was born in the slum area of Chandrapura Bokaro. He was brought into our care by his mother so he could receive our support.

He has been an exemplary ex-student who has selflessly supported the work of DOM both physically and financially. His mother continues to work at the DOM hospital in spite of the fact that he can financially support her,

as she wishes to continue to serve those less fortunate. Ravi Malhi now works as an IT engineer in Delhi and earns a good salary. He has chosen to generously donate towards a three-day Langar to the 'no one is hungry' service.

It is charitable acts like this, which show that the teachings and principles our students learnt during their time at Divine Onkar Mission, are making an impact to themselves and others.



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Hehal Birhor and Malhar Tola

Throughout the pandemic the ex-students have delivered a number of initiatives to support those in need. In one instance they pooled their own money to buy supplies to dispense to the people of Hehal Birhor and Malhar Tola. With the help of DOM, Mr. Manmohan Singh Lamba and Gyan Mahila Samiti they distributed food parcels to 60 homes. The students and the DOM team also distributed food supplies to the people at Ramgarh Bijulia Colony.



Indira Nagar Leprosy Colony

The Onkariyan Youths and the DOM team visited the Indira Nagar leprosy colony to distribute rations to those who are continuing to struggle during the Covid-19 pandemic, which resulted in lockdown. There they were pleasantly surprised to meet former student Roshni Pandaya. Roshni passed her secondary education with DOM and then continued her studies to become an English teacher. This was funded partially by her working part time and with support from her father. She too was delighted to meet her former classmates and the General Manager, Mr. Rajesh Nagi. She proudly spoke about her continued achievements and we approached her to share her journey in the *Student Profile*.



Well Done to Our Alumni Students

We are very proud of our past students who have continued their work with the charity alongside carving out careers of their own.

They have generously raised their hands to volunteer their time, energy and money to help during this difficult time. This not only shows what hard work and commitment can accomplish but it also sets a wonderful example for our younger students.

They will be able to see for themselves that when you are given the opportunity you can achieve anything you set your mind to. We look forward to seeing what our alumni will do next. Well done to you all.

Onkar Old Age Home Visit

Inspired by the selfless support that he received as a student at the Divine Onkar Mission, Raj Kishore an ex-student of DOM, who on his own initiative wanted to make a donation to the kitchen of the Onkar Old Age Home. During the month of June, he wished to make a sizeable contribution which he and his friends Neha and Mithlesh had saved from their earnings. They visited the Onkar Old Age Home, spending time with the elders and donated: rice, flour, oil, and other food items.



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COVID-19 RESPONSE IN INDIA

DOM Takes The Initiative

The DOM team which is comprised of our General Secretary, Mr. Rajesh Nagi, friends and staff members. They have sought to provide aid to the remote villages where people funded their lives based only on daily earnings, which have been profoundly impacted by the pandemic.

The elders of each village are informed of the educational support their children can receive from the Divine Onkar Mission. The services provided by the DOM eye hospital are explained to ensure that no one suffers blindness due to cataracts.

No reasonable request for sustainable support is turned away and this is exemplified by the following: a resident at Ramgarh, Mr. Shankar Tiwari, broke his leg in an accident. He is a rickshaw driver by profession and needs to keep his job to provide for his family. We met his medical expenses ensuring that he is now able to walk. In total his



treatment cost Rs. 3800 plus Rs. 200 for his living expenses. In the UK this equates to less than £40!

Whilst distributing rations at the Nirmala Leprosy colony, Agriculture/ Horticulture Officer, Mr. Vikas Kumar joined the DOM team. The residents spoke about their sanitation requirements. The local government had partially installed toilets however, the doors were left incomplete. Mr. Kumar was kind

enough to arrange to have the toilets repaired and the door attached.

People who work at the Ranchi railway station are from the Nirmala leprosy colony and have struggled to feed their families. DOM, in collaboration with Ranchi District Agriculture Horticulture Officer, Shri Vikas Kumar, distributed much needed food supplies to some 41 households at the colony.



Belabahali

In Odisha our Manager Mr. Gobardhan Behera and his team visited three villages where they provided supplies to 200 families. In one of the villages named Belabahali they met Mr. Kalandi Charan Sahoo, who is suffering from cancer and is unable to work or provide for his family while receiving treatment. The team provided him with extra provisions to help him and his family during this difficult time.

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COVID-19 RESPONSE IN INDIA



Anmol Singh Mobile Centre

The DOM team was met by Vice President of Anmol Singh Mobile Centre, Babu Bhaiya Ajit Gupta, Birsa Prasad and Bhanu Devi.

Mr Gupta has an aid distribution camp near the local railway station. They joined him there to distribute supplies to the poor and their families, the majority of whom are rickshaw drivers.

However, the same issue continues to arise - a lack of work and no help from the government during this pandemic. We can offer the children of these families an education, supplies and basic health care, but at present these are only temporary solutions.



Bijulia Colony

The team provided aid to Ramgarh Bijulia Colony to distribute rations.

Children were also provided with stationary to help with their educational needs during lockdown. Once our school re-opens, pupils will have the opportunity to study with our residential institution which provides good quality free education.

Goriaribagi Village

Our team continued the distribution work in the Goriaribagi village. The villagers are market traders but due to the pandemic they had to cease all trading.

They do not have no other means of financial support and have run out of resources. Our team, Rajendra Yadav, Manoj Bedia, along with Vinod Jaiswal, distributed rations among all the families and we continued to support during this difficult period.



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FARMERS PROTEST



NEW VOLUNTEERS

During this pandemic we have seen many examples of real humanity in action - from providing food to the poor, to giving out free medical supplies and services to those most in need. The human spirit has been evident in the tireless work carried out by our wonderful volunteers.

Volunteers have stepped up from the unlikelyst of places. Through our networks we located Mr. Jasbir Singh Bedi who desired to do something to

help. He and his team of volunteers began handing out essential supplies, predominantly food parcels, in a number of different areas across Haryana, Delhi.

In late 2020 thousands of farmers marched from the northern states of India to Delhi to protest against the reforms passed by the Government. There had been deliberations for months before, but no agreement could be reached. Throughout this year more farmers from all across India have joined the protests in the capital.

We are an apolitical organisation that reaches out to those struggling socially and economically through crisis. We began our service at the farmer's protest at the Singhu border, Delhi. Our volunteers conducted basic medical examinations and gave out free medical supplies. Once Covid took hold, there was more of a need for medical assistance. This prompted DOM to make contact with eye specialist Dr. Balbir Singh, from Patiala, Punjab. He and his team were already on location to support the



farmers and they became our regular team on the ground at the protest sites. We provided them with funds to access medical supplies, such as: PPE, oxygen, immunity boosters and vitamins. They not only worked at the border but also visited nearby villages in Haryana to provide supplies.

During the work it came to light that a number of people didn't have the means to undergo cataract operations for their eyes. Dr. Balbir Singh and his team began performing eye operations and after care for patients at his centre. To date we have donated 3000 pairs of glasses and funds toward 60 operations!



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INDIA EVENTS

RECOGNITION FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT & AWARDS



Throughout the period of the Covid Pandemic our staff and volunteers received recognition for their dedicated and tireless work. In September our volunteers received an award from the Lions Club of Ranchi's Women's Wing, Samarpan group who honoured DOM and our volunteers on India's Teacher's Day.



To receive the award the General Secretary of Divine Onkar Mission, Mr. Rajesh Nagi along with his wife Neetu Nagi were present. Teachers from our Ramgarh school were also present, Poonam Wala Sharma and Nirmala Mehta.

Akhil Bhartiya Aggarwal Kalyan Mahasabha awarded DOM and our volunteers the Karmaveer award for all the charitable work our team carried out during the lockdown. Dignitaries from Ramgarh and the state legislature (Mrs. Mamta Devi), were in attendance.

Impressed by the langar service conducted by our staff at Ramgarh, Mr. Vishal Kumar, the proprietor of Mona Gas Agency and surveyor of the insurance company, honoured Mrs. Surendra Devi, the mother of Divine Onkar Mission. He presented an award and a certificate.



These honours are dedicated to all our volunteers who do such great work on the ground, including at the height of the pandemic. We cannot thank you enough for the steadfast and perilous work you carried out during the lockdown. We also express our thanks to the donors who helped to fund this work and keep our projects alive and moving forward.



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INDIA EVENTS

Onkar Old Age Home's New Residents

Through the peak of Covid and beyond, people are still feeling the after effects of the pandemic. We are finding that many senior citizens across India are being poorly treated and abandoned by family members. This has led to an influx of new residents this year.

Including Ormanjhi Chutupalu, a homeless woman who was unable to remember her name or address; she was brought to the Onkar Old Age Home by a Police Control-Room Van (PCR) patrolling the area. We were able to provide her with a much needed place to stay.

Other new residents included Mr. Tapan Kumar Mishra and Mr. Mangra Tudu. Neither man has any family to care for them. Both Mr. Tapan Kumar's eyes were damaged and required urgent medical treatment, which we provided. Mr. Mangra Tudu, who is a resident of Bokaro district, has a physical disability and lived alone. Both men now have a safe place to live.



This is Pagli Devi, who has a physical disability. Recently her husband re-married and Pagli, was thrown out of their family home. We took her in and she now does not have to worry about a roof over her head, but the emotional scars will take time to heal.

Kinkar Sao and his wife, Ginni Devi, were living in Jamshedpur. He made his living by selling biscuits and chocolates from a handcart. The home which the couple were renting was sold, so with little funds he came to Ramgarh with his nephews. His family unfortunately were unable to care for the couple. They now have shelter in our Old Age Home.

Phulmani Devi, was a resident of Chainpur, Ramgarh. She told us that her only son, Vinod Sahu beat her regularly, until she had had enough and left the family home looking for refuge in our old age home. In October we took her in and she does not now have to live in fear as she will be cared for by us.



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STUDENT PROFILE

ROSHNI PANDAYA



Roshni is pictured above, first row far left

'I was born in 1999 at the Indira Nagar Colony in Jagganathpur, Ranchi, Jharkhand. Both my mother and father come from a poor family, so they couldn't admit me to a good school due to a lack of money.

Luckily, we found out about a school in Ramgarh - Divine Onkar Mission. We were told that this school takes in poor and orphaned children and provides them with boarding and a free education. In 2002 my parents decided to speak with Mr. Rajesh Nagi, General Secretary of DOM, and I was admitted that year. I made

plenty of friends which made me really happy and the atmosphere at the institution is really good. I always enjoyed studying and the teachers and staff are experienced. It was the beginning of my new life.

It is not only the educational aspect which DOM focuses on but also extracurricular activities like: drama, dance, teaching morals and values. I loved to dance and sing. Whenever we had a programme I always performed. I also had the opportunity to perform at other institutions. I would always give 100% because I was passionate. I was five years old when I won my first award (shield) for my performance. When I

performed people laughed and cried because of my singing. I praised the other competitors and said: Shine like the moon but there is a spot in it, but I have no spot. Currently I am studying B-Ed, while my family are taking different jobs to support me. When I have time, I give tuition to the poorer children. DOM was there to give me a chance, now I wish to pay that forward.

My father says slowly, slowly you will reach your destination. You carry on watering the plant; only when the time is right will it bear fruit, but I always think to myself my dreams do not come true. I have had to work to carve a path for myself.'

Punjab Project

Periodically, we have carried out charity work in the state of Punjab. Over time we have worked with various organisations including the Pingalwara Charitable Society Amritsar, which helps the destitute and those who suffer with leprosy.

Since our team went over to provide aid during the Punjab floods of 2018, our aim has been to open an operational site there.

Now, after much demand from donors we are able to make this dream a possibility. Our long-term donor and supporter, Mr. Kulwant

Gora and his associates are working with us on this project. Once we have initiated the legal process to set up our operations, we then will be in a position to strategically plan our projects. If you would like to contribute to this project, please see the back of this newsletter.



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COMMUNITY AWARENESS & PREVENTION PROGRAMMES

Van Mahotsava

Van Mahotsava means "the festival of trees", it is celebrated in the first week of July. The festival educates and promotes the need for trees and forests - as they are one of the best ways to prevent global warming and reduce pollution. Trees and forests play a very crucial role in maintaining an ecological balance and providing oxygen to our planet.

Our students took part in a week-long celebration of Van Mahotsava. They carried out a plantation ceremony, speeches and artwork. On the last day there was time for dramatic performances by the children, highlighting the importance and sacred nature of trees.

By encouraging young people to take an active role with what is happening to our planet, it will encourage them to become conscientious adults and make changes that can benefit future generations.



Environment Day

Throughout the year our operational projects abroad often welcome visitors from different organisations. On environment day the members of the Rotary Club of Damodar Valley came to visit. They planted trees with the children and also explained how to improve and protect the environment. It was a great educational experience for our students. We appreciate their visit and that they took the time to promote such a worthy cause.



No One Should Remain Hungry

One of the early teachings of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji was the concept of langar. This is a free community kitchen created to uphold the principle of equality between all people of the world regardless of religion, caste, colour, creed, age, gender, social status and to eradicate extreme poverty in the world.

During Covid our teams went out to provide food parcels to the wider community, as a number of people had lost their jobs due to the pandemic. It was at this time we realised that one of the main

concerns people had, was where their next meal would come from. The langar service at DOM Ramgarh was created in response to this need. This provision has been a great success, with people coming from all over the district of Ramgarh and adjoining villages.

We could not have done it without the support of those who donated not only their money but also their time. We thank you all for your service.

If you would like to commemorate any occasion whether it be a birthday, a death anniversary or receiving good news; a lovely way to do this is to sponsor a langar (see last page for prices).



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UK EVENTS

Donation from GNNSJ

The Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha in Birmingham have been long time advocates and members. We have supported each other's projects over the years. This year they have been kind enough to donate a substantial amount to our charity. We thank them for their generosity and the worthy causes they champion here and abroad.

Thriving Counselling Service

As some of you are aware Divine Onkar Mission provides a free counselling service to the wider community, but especially those who find it difficult to access such services. It is run by one of the charity Directors, Kumlaish Kumari.

Since Covid we have seen an increase in enquiries for counselling, predominantly through word of mouth from previous clients who benefited from the service. It has proved to be a successful year and this much needed provision to the community is thriving.



Founder's Message

During this time, we have lost loved ones and we have had to overcome challenges we did not think we would have to experience in our lifetime. Through the darkness the beacon of light has been the human spirit displayed in acts of kindness. I would like to thank all our donors for their continued support during this pandemic and through the years. We know it has not been easy, but your faithfulness and commitment mean the world to us.

This time has been a trying time for all of us, however it appears life is returning to some semblance of normality. Our projects in India are operational and we are slowly returning to a new norm. If these past few years have taught us anything it is to cherish and celebrate what we have. This year we will be celebrating our 30th birthday! Back in 1991 we began proceedings to make our organisation a recognised charity. After years of hard work and resilience from our early supporters we were able to accomplish this. I would like to dedicate this newsletter to you as none of this would have been possible without your support.

Mr Tersam Lal

Founder & Chairman

Donated Items

To all of our donors, thank you for your contributions - they are an essential part of our charity and we appreciate all the donations given to us over the years. We ask that everyone be mindful that any donations left outside our premises are considered fly tipping and we can no longer accept them as a donation. We would be grateful if all donations be brought inside the warehouse during opening hours.

Lodge Donations

Our Trustee, Mrs Kumlaish Kumari made contact with Wolverhampton's Concordia Lodge no. 5131 and conducted a presentation about the work that our charity does. The members of the lodge were kind enough to donate £150 towards our cataract operation programme in India. Later, members from Hallas Abbey Lodge no. 5407 in Halesowen raised £70 to support our projects. By networking with other organisations, we are able to accomplish more.



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HOW YOU CAN HELP ?

To help the charity save money on postage can donors and patrons please provide your email address

If you would like to help with any of our projects please complete the form below and send it to:
Divine Onkar Mission, Drayton Street, Off Dudley Road, Wolverhampton, WV2 4EA. Telephone: 01902 453 453 Freephone: 0800 316 9453, Fax: 01902 459 911 Warehouse Telephone: 01902 456 444

☐ Yes, I would like to support the Divine Onkar Mission. I have enclosed a cheque/cash

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Education Sponsorship | ☐ £.....Monthly |
| Implant Cataract | ☐ £50 |
| Operation Medical Camp | ☐ £1000 |
| Daily Langar | ☐ £175 |
| Water Well | ☐ £650 |
| Build Homes for the Homeless | ☐ £2000 |
| Classroom Construction | ☐ £2500 |
| Leprosy Treatment for one | ☐ £150 |
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☐ Yes, I would like to make a regular gift to Divine Onkar Mission, Please check the standing order details below:

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I wish for DOM to regard my donation as a gift aid donation and be able to reclaim

CONTACT US

Divine Onkar Mission

Drayton Street
 Wolverhampton
 WV2 4EA

☎ 01902 453 453
 🌐 divineonkarmission.org.uk
 ✉ info@divineonkar.org

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