

# BRIDGING THE GAP



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## LIFE POST COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a pernicious impact on human life and the economy in the past two years. We accept the fact that many of these changes are irreversible. However, we have not let these challenges bog us down. In the last quarter, we have taken several significant actions to move forward in our commitment to improving the social, economic, and political empowerment of the marginalized and under-served communities.

Thanks to our supporters/donors, whose help has enabled us enormously to bring visible changes in people's lives from the last mile.

Given the upward trend of inequality, vulnerability, and occupational hazards, we believe that our efforts in restoring lives and the economy must be more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable.

With your support, we will emerge transformative and thriving in our endeavors again.

**Ms Ruchi Kashyap, CEO and Executive Trustee, Atmashakti Trust**

Access to water is not a *privilege*, it's a *human right*!



Women collecting water from an open source in Odisha's Kandhamal district

In Odisha, people face an acute water crisis. 56% of households in Odisha do not have a piped water connection, according to the data of the Panchayati Raj and drinking water department, despite the State Government's claim to provide water connections to all rural households by March 2024. Subsequently, the drinking water supply project is yet to see the light in as many as 160 blocks of the state which is another worrying trend.

Water woes are much more rampant in remote villages than elsewhere. People walk miles to collect water for family needs. The repercussion of lack of access to water is not only limited to the domestic front – it leads to other negative implications such as the dropout of girls from schools and life-long health issues for women.

As the entire state was reeling under a heat wave in Mid-April and May, it caused water scarcity in the rural areas and those who dwell on hilly terrains.

The lack of available water infrastructures such as bore-wells, and tube wells, added with wizeness of ponds and water streams, worsened the situation. Keeping that need in mind, we kick-started a state-wide campaign, **"Ama Pain Pani" (Water For Us)**, to help ensure access to safe drinking water for all households in targeted 1000 villages across 12 districts of Odisha.

## Safe Drinking Water Campaign Survey Findings



1336

Total number of villages surveyed in 12 Districts of Odisha. It was found that there were water issues in all the villages surveyed.

"We only have 1 tubewell for the entire village, but the water is not good - there is a lot of iron in the water. So we have demanded a solar water tank. We depend on Chuan, which is 1 km away from the villages."

Villagers of Paderi (sangadmaha) village, Marlanga GP, Kotagarh Block, Kandhamal District, Odisha

634

Defunct Tubewells

906

Without Solar Water Supply

944

Without Piped Water Supply

## Planning *process* of the campaign



01

### Collecting evidences

Finalising survey sample, data collection and completion, team orientation



02

### Amplifying issues

Conducting village meetings, approaching local authorities to solve water issues



03

### Pluralising support

Meeting authorities, discussion with CSOs, highlighting local water woes in media for public attention



04

### Policy advocacy

Highlighting findings at state level, meeting with government authorities, people's representatives, using media to tell our story

## Updates from the ground (April-June)



### #Warrior

To ensure the formation of e-Sangathan in targeted areas, the building of a community #warrior cadre has started in 900 villages of Odisha through community meetings, engaging with schools, colleges, and other institutions. Conducted orientations of #warrior cadres to build perspectives on e-Sangathan



### Nutritional Kitchen Garden (NKGs)

We could facilitate the free distribution of vegetable seeds to 4525 households from the Odisha government's Horticulture department to the marginalised and resource-poor communities in Kandhamal to help them grow Nutritional Kitchen Garden (NKG) in our effort to fight Malnutrition by ensuring their access to healthy and nutritious food.



### Agriculture

To promote organic farming in Boudh, Deogarh, Gajapati and Nabarangapur districts, we have conducted massive field demonstrations on organic farming processes for farmers.

- 1110 demo on Seed Treatment for 31491 farmers
- 1024 demo on Khajrakhat for 29118 farmers



### Urban Slum Intervention Bhubaneswar

- 12 Basti (slum) level committees formed in South East & South West Zone to expedite collective community intervention
- Over 100 issues such as old age pension, ration cards, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) issues resolved through coordination with government department and Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC)



### Model Chatashali

- Process Finalized for setting up "1000 Model Chatashali" covering 9 districts in our operational areas across Odisha
- Engaged with SMCs, teachers and parents for ensuring 100% attendance and enrolment of children into school



### Volunteer Boot Camps

- Organized boot camps and area wise group meetings with volunteers in Malkangiri, Rayagada, Kandhamal and Koraput district of Odisha to start process of the volunteer network. During this period, we organised 14 Shivirs (Boot Camp) where 377 volunteers participated

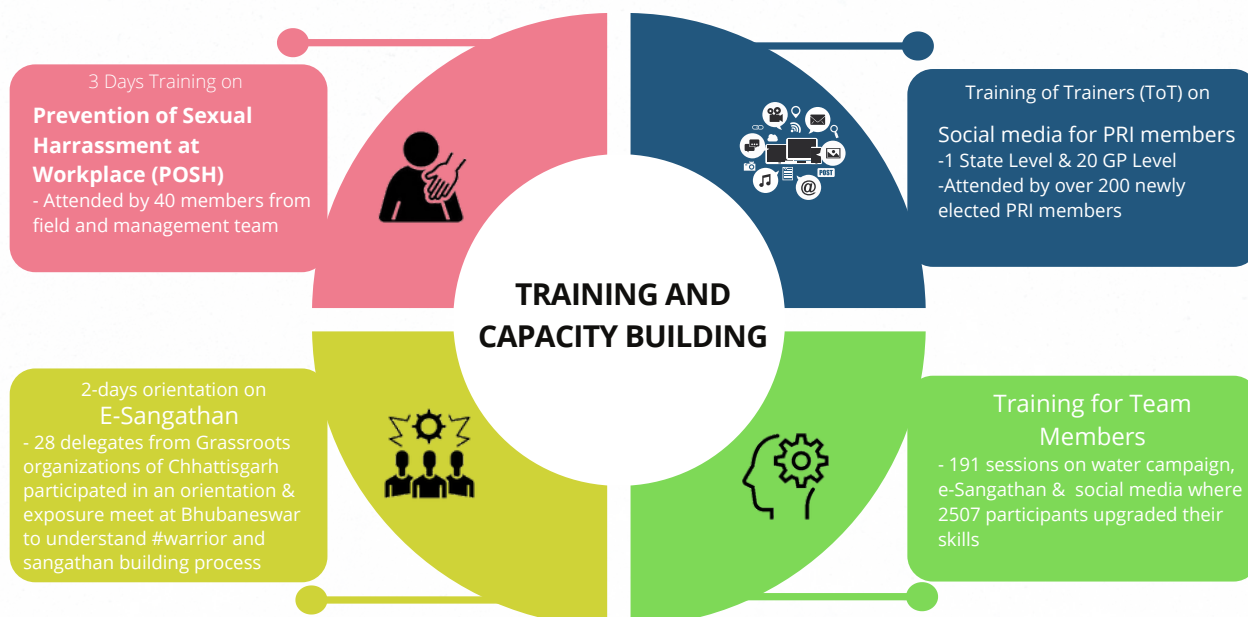


### Livelihood through MGNREGA

- Late payment of 396 villages under MGNREGA were identified out of which issues of 126 villages resolved.
- 17549 job card holders have been allocated work during this period

## Honing Skills -improving work efficiency

The objective of our training and capacity building unit is to assist team members and other learners from Sangathan (partner collectives) to gain knowledge and develop perspectives on socio-economic and political aspects of development by upgrading their knowledge base, skills, tools and techniques. In the last quarter, we have undertaken several training on different subjects and topics as a part of our ongoing skill up-gradation initiative.



## Model Chatashali- a supplementary education initiative

Starting in mid-August 2021, the Mo Chatashali initiative achieved many milestones in policy impact and improving learning outcomes among children.

Major Milestones:

- Provided learning support to over 0.10 million children through Mo Chatashali learning centers
- No dropout among students in areas where we opened Mo Chatashali centers
- Regular meetings and engagement with SMC members and parents during the process helped them to know their roles and responsibilities and children's Right to Education (RTE).
- Received recognition from Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights as a successful education model
- A learning recovery program was initiated by the Odisha government, a model similar to Mo Chatashali, for implementation in the state as a post-covid education initiative.
- The mental health of children, which constituted one of our important recommendations in the study report "Bridging the Gap," was included in the school curriculum of the state government. To read our study report, please click [here](#).



The study report "Bridging the Gap" being released in an event by the Chairperson of OSCPCR Ms. Sandhyabati Pradhan and other dignitaries



Our CEO Ms Ruchi Kashyap receiving award from OSCPCR

However, our journey does not stop here. Now, we are embarking on establishing Model Chatashali, an improved and tailor-made supplementary education model in 9 districts (Kandhamal, Kalahandi, Koraput, Rayagada, Malkangiri, Gajapati, Mayurbhanj, Sundergarh, Keonjhar) to cater to the learning needs of children in rural Odisha. Upon successful implementation, we would engage CSOs, policymakers, researchers, and the government for replication/adoption of this model. To know more about our community-led education initiative, please click [here](#).

## Atmashakti Call for Action 2022

The Ranikhet Call for Action, our annual team event, came as a gift for all at Atmashakti since the COVID-19 pandemic had brought travel and tourism to a standstill for the last two years. So, we took the golden opportunity and brought our Odisha and New Delhi team to Ranikhet, Uttarakhand. However, we changed our approach from a retreat to a call for action event, accepting that our endeavors in a post-pandemic world would be different.

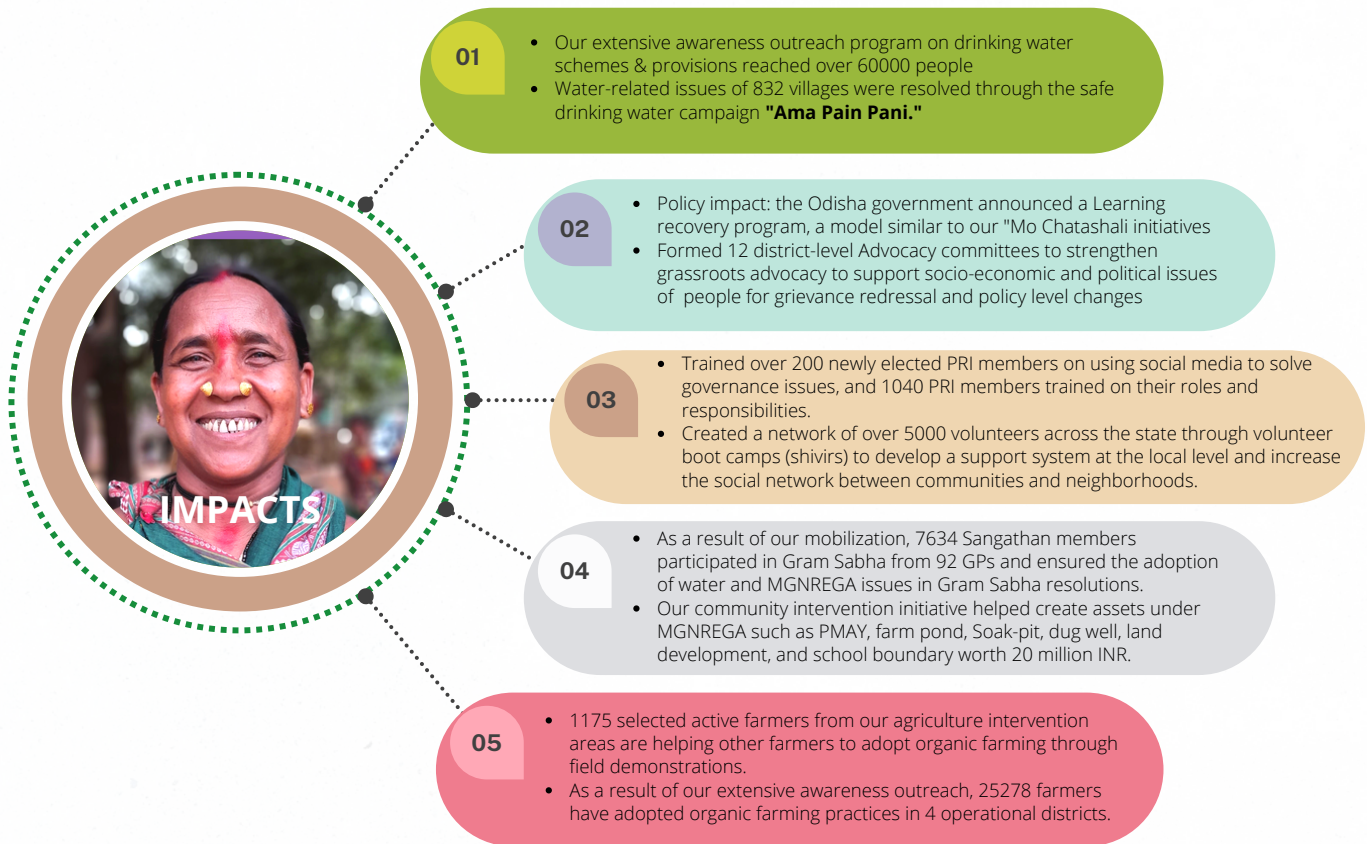
The week-long event from 11th to 16th April had learning sessions, group presentations, assessment of skill sets, and most of all, preparing a broad work strategy for 2022-23 of our organization. All our team members also took a self and collective pledge for this year to take up roles to contribute to community development.

The Call for Action event honored team members who worked exceptionally hard during the pandemic, keeping the organization's mandates and values at the top.



Snapshots from the Ranikhet Call for Action Event 2022

## Our Impact- *reaching the most marginalized*



## Going further (July-September 2022)

### MGNREGA

- Understanding work allocation and late payment issues under MGNREGA in Odisha through a purposive study and a feedback process involving beneficiaries
- Identifying policy as well as administrative bottlenecks related to late payment and undertaking a campaign to address late payment issues at the block to the state level
- Strengthening local self-governance by using Gram Sabha to allocate and monitor works under MGNREGA
- Organizing a particular drive for allocating MGNREGA work for school infrastructure development
- Organizing a mass campaign, "Let's work," to mobilize people to demand jobs under MGNREGA in our operational areas.

### FOREST

- Understanding structural as well as implementational lacunae of the implementation of the Forest Rights Act 2006 in Odisha
- Collecting evidence on the rejection of Individual as well as Community Forest rights of Scheduled Tribes and traditional forest dwellers
- Expedite the process of approving community land claims by forest dwellers and forest workers
- Engaging with district and state government officials, Forest Rights Committees, NGOs, and other stakeholders to make the approval and rejection process of individual and community land claims under FRA utterly transparent so that these rejected cases can be appealed.

### HEALTH

- Understanding the inclusion and coverage status of the Odisha government's Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) scheme through a sample survey and secondary data
- Undertaking a state-wide community-led campaign drive for inclusion and coverage of all eligible beneficiaries of the scheme using the feedback redressal mechanism
- Running an effective advocacy campaign to engage policymakers and the state government to increase political and public will toward effective implementation of the BSKY scheme in the state.

### EDUCATION

- Building capacities of SMC members and PTAs through meetings and discussions at the village level
- Establishing Model Chatashali in proposed 9 districts in Odisha
- Engaging with volunteers for shared learning and effective functioning of Chatashali
- Highlighting success stories from the ground to create visibility and credibility around the cause

### WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

- Conducting a purposive study to take stock of the effectiveness of the Odisha government's **Khushi** scheme in our Women Centric Village Areas of Sundergarh district in Odisha
- Engaging with schools, colleges, and other institutions to run awareness drives for adolescent girls on sanitary napkins, health, hygiene, etc.

### E-SANGATHAN

- Establishing e-Sangathan (a digitally-enabled people's collectives) from village to the district level in Odisha to use information and communication technologies (ICT) to solve local as well as policy issues that impact the rights and entitlements of people
- Creating individual and community #warriors in Odisha and Chhattisgarh to expedite our grassroots activism for social change.







## About Us

Atmashakti is a right-based catalyst organization that coalesces Tribal and Dalit people for their socio-economic and political empowerment. For more than a decade, with a consistent focus on collectivizing the community, Atmashakti has facilitated the formation of more than 23 collectives in 17 districts and 84 blocks of Odisha. Atmashakti has a mission to reach out to ten million underprivileged families in Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and other poor states in India. To know more about us, please visit [www.atmashaktitrust.com](http://www.atmashaktitrust.com)

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