

## Arati Jena: Helping People is What Makes Me Happy Bhubaneswar, India



Living in Barabhuja Basti for last 20 years Arati Jena has been helping her community in different ways. Popularly known as Kuni didi, she derives pleasure in helping her community. Following her passion of social work, she decided to take it forward in a structured way by forming a self-help group in 2014. This 15-member SHG has its own identity and even a bank account. Together, she has helped in setting up 13 SHGs in the nearby settlements of Jagamara Bhoi Sahi, Dumduma Bhoi Sahi, Dumduma Pana Sahi and Barabhuja.

Arati's ambition took her to a bigger platform of Mahilla Arogya Samiti Area Level Federation and eventually in 2016 she formed Maa Barabhuja Mahilla Mahasangha.

Being the president of the MAS has enhanced her gamut of contribution to varied activities such as waste collection work in her ward every Sunday, managing for toilet subsidy for 35 households and helping 50 people in getting Aadhar card, 48 individuals obtaining ration card and assisting 130 people in opening bank account.

As a Swacchagrahi, Arati Jena has connected 10 households with municipal water supply. She has also been helping the elderly people in distress; her old age home started with 3 members and has now grown with 12 members.

Arati Jena has proven herself in helping the community during disaster and distress time, be it during the cyclone Fani or outbreak of pandemic. She, along with her other members, have provided dry and cooked food to the needy in the community in her ward, cleaned the slum, and even cleared the pathway by cutting the trees.

### Journey with CFAR

Arati Jena's association with CFAR started a year back but she has already been an integral part of all the initiatives taken in her Ward. Understanding the importance of menstrual hygiene management, she has been creating awareness on proper hygiene to adolescent girls and has helped in creating a Pad Bank in Jagamara Bhoi Sahi, for the poor and needy girls /woman, by procuring sanitary pads from BMC and also raising it from the community, voluntarily. Her dedication and continuous effort in helping people has set an example for the community.



## COVID- 19 Emergency Response



Since the outbreak of Covid 19, Arati Jena has been creating awareness in four nearby settlements in her ward and also helping the most needy and vulnerable by supporting with dry food and cooked food. Till date, she has supported 150 persons every day for last 8 days and has provided dry ration to 65 households in her own capacity. She has been providing information on schemes and benefit to all the beneficiaries in her community.

Her support has also been seen in counseling the elderly people and addressing their fear for the pandemic. She has been creating a path for many others to follow and has proven herself to be a leader amidst all circumstances.

As rightly said by Mahatma Gandhi: “Unity to be real must stand the severest strain without breaking”, SWF Members and MAS Members of “Maa Jageswari” have been playing an active role, with its 13 members in creating awareness, helping the Govt officials in distribution of dry ration, assisting the ASHA workers in door to door health check-ups and helping elderly people in getting the necessary requirement for them. The group formed in 2015, has been working

for the community, be that in cleanliness drive, on creating health awareness, providing information on immunisation schedule for children or helping Govt in reaching out to the beneficiaries.. In this difficult time the community members are creating awareness on hand washing, maintaining social distance yet supporting each other in spite of the physical distance. They are alerting the authorities, if they observe COVID-19 symptoms in any person. They have been helping the elderly in getting their dry ration and pension by facilitating conveyance and escorting them to the venue. Their spirit and unity is setting an example for others to follow.

