



*Empowering Mothers, Building Futures:*

# Mahila Arogya Samitis

Leading Change in Pune's Underserved Neighbourhoods



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# Enhancing MCH Services in Pune's Vulnerable Urban Pockets

SATHI-Anusandhan Trust, since 2024, has improved healthcare and nutrition for Pune's vulnerable communities by revitalizing inactive Mahila Arogya Samitis (MAS). These women-led governance platforms successfully boost local accountability, increase facility use, and improve critical maternal and child health outcomes.



## **Overcrowded & Vulnerable:**

Population density is up to 6X higher than in non-slum areas, harboring vulnerable groups like migrants and illiterate mothers who often miss essential care



## **Poor Living Conditions:**

Structural barriers like unsafe water and inadequate sanitation heavily elevate infection risks



## **Healthcare Barriers:**

Financial limits and poor outreach cause delayed treatments, particularly impacting the critically poor nutritional health of children under five

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# Preparedness planning

## ■ 1 Recruit & Train

Hire and prep field staff and a facilitator.

## ■ 2 Assess Situation

Map health systems and local needs.

## ■ 3 Baseline Data

Conduct door-to-door screening for ANC/PNC and Child Malnutrition.

## ■ 4 Plan Action

Create area-specific health plans.

## ■ 5 Generate Demand

Activate Mahila Arogya Samitis

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# Continuum of care framework through MAS activation



## **Monitor pregnancy**

MAS members support ASHAs in identifying, tracking, and registering pregnant women



## **Infancy and childhood**

Help ANMs and AWWs to proactively track children for immunisation and malnourishment



## **Social Determinants of Health**

MAS members actively monitor neighbourhood sanitation and hygiene and local Anganwadi centers



## **Health entitlements**

MAS as a collective voice demand for quality primary care system



## **Awareness campaigns**

MAS members run targeted awareness campaigns on early breastfeeding, nutrition, complementary infant feeding, and family planning



**MAS members are acting as bridging the link between frontline workers and service users.**

## Impact Drivers of MAS



**Community mobilization for issue identification and resolution**



**Improvements in Care Quality**



**Increased Awareness of Health Services, Nutrition and Wellness**



**Improving the Social Drivers of Health: neighborhood hygiene and sanitation**



**Health Systems Optimisation**

# Driving sustainable improvements in maternal and child well-being

By bridging gaps with frontline health workers, MAS fosters long-term community ownership to sustainably improve maternal health and child nutrition and immunisation rates at the grassroots level.

## Trends in services and indicators spanning the pre-MAS (2022-Sept. 2024) and active MAS (Nov. 2024-2026) periods

	Pre- MAS (2022-Sept. 2024) (N=886)	Active MAS (Nov. 2024-2026) (N=598)	Change
Utilisation of Public Care Services	28.6%	70.3%	↑ 145.8%
Monthly ASHA home visits	51.8%	82.2%	↑ 58.7%
Supplementary nutrition from Anganwadi	52.5%	71.6%	↑ 36.4%
Received MCP Card	74.3%	83.2%	↑ 12.0%
Infant immunisation & Vit A delivery	85.9%	92.6%	↑ 7.8%
Deliveries in public institutions	50.0%	53.3%	↑ 6.6%
Received 2 doses of TT vaccine	90.7%	93.8%	↑ 3.4%
	November 2024 (N=353)	February 2026 (N=574)	Change
Moderate Underweight (MUW)	19.8%	8.4%	↓ 57.6%
Severe Underweight (SUW)	7.1%	2.6%	↓ 63.4%
Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM)	10.3%	2.4%	↓ 76.7%
Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM)	5.1%	0.0%	↓ 99.8%

# Centering Lived Experiences



## From Struggle to Safety

A woman with a previous C-section, was pregnant for the second time. On advise of a SATHI field worker and MAS members and due to her financial constraints she sought care at a PHC. Despite receiving regular and proper medical treatment, her hemoglobin levels dropped requiring iron injections. She received these injections completely free of cost at the government hospital. She received quality healthcare during her pregnancy. Ultimately, her C-section delivery took

place at the public hospital. Her husband frequently expresses his gratitude to the SATHI worker, *“Tai, we received immense help because of you.”*

## Hope, Health, and Healing

A mother of two from a Pune slum, conceived a third child hoping for a son. Facing financial constraints due to her husband’s drinking, she sought free medical options. The SATHI worker recommended her to the nearest PHC, where doctors diagnosed her with severe obesity (110 kg), high blood pressure, and swollen feet. PHC MO referred her to the government hospital for specialized care. The hospital provided comprehensive, cost-free treatment and reimbursed her travel expenses. She deeply appreciated the SATHI worker, her local MAS committee, and the hospital staff for their immense support, meticulously monitoring her vitals, managing medications, advising walks, and exceptional care, *“They provided excellent medical care.”*



## A Success Story of Public Healthcare

A pregnant resident of Lakshminagar with two children, sought help from a SATHI field worker to terminate her pregnancy. The woman was a frequent attendee of MAS meetings since past two years (although she is not a MAS member) and thus known to the worker. The worker referred her to the nearest PHC which directed her to the public hospital for her medical abortion and care.

Accompanying the woman the worker introduced her to the nursing staff who provided her with crucial family planning guidance. The woman successfully underwent both the abortion and a family planning surgery at a scheduled date. Government assistance ensured she received excellent, cost-free care.

This timely support completely relieved her worries, leaving her deeply satisfied and secure about her family’s future. She expressed *“Your health service related advise helped me in getting quality health services as well as saving my money”*

## Small Changes, Big Growth

An underweight child in Pune’s slum, successfully gained weight thanks to guidance from his Arogya Sathi. His mother learned to enhance his meals with oilseed powder, egg yolk, and coconut oil. The SATHI worker emphasized serving diverse flavors to increase food intake and stressed strict hygiene, including washing hands and cleaning utensils with soap.

The mom also set up a “Baal Kopara” (Child’s Corner). This dedicated space allows the child to feed himself healthy snacks independently whenever he is hungry. The field worker advised replacing store-bought packaged items with nutritious snacks like puffed rice, peanut chikki, jaggery, peanuts, sesame laddoos, roasted gram, and bananas. By consistently applying this advice, the child’s health improved. The mom now shares her success at MAS community meetings to inspire other mothers.



## From Fear to Smiling Future

A women resident of a Pune’s slum initially doubted municipal healthcare for her second high-risk pregnancy. A SATHI worker was a frequent visitor to the area for MAS meetings and related work. The worker guided her through free prenatal checkups and scans at the nearest PHC. When the woman needed advanced care, the worker managed her transfer to the public hospital, constantly calming her fears about a repeat C-section. The dedication paid off beautifully. On April 9th, doctors successfully delivered a healthy 2,700-gram baby boy. After a smooth five-day recovery and receiving a helpful Anganwadi baby kit, a grateful mom smiled, “Your support changed everything for my family.”

## The Bal Kopara Turnaround

In Ramnagar, a health worker found a young child underweight. The mother, a regular at community health meetings (MAS), eagerly sought guidance to help him grow. Through awareness sessions at the community meetings the family learned about food enrichment for enhancing nutrient levels in everyday foods. They added oilseed powder, coconut oil, ghee, boiled eggs, chicken soup, thick lentils, and leafy greens to the child’s diet with They also set up a “Child’s Corner/ Bal Kopara” at home- a space that held accessible, nutritious snacks like roasted gram and homemade jaggery laddoos with peanuts and puffed rice, encouraging child’s independent eating. These efforts led to successful weight gain and improved health. During the SATHI worker’s home visits, the family expressed gratitude for the ongoing support, hygiene checks, and nutritional education.





*Mahila Arogya Samitis are a vital bridge between the poor urban communities and health services. Working closely with the frontline workers the MAS empower local groups to create strong and long-lasting systems change. By tracking immunisations, supporting safer pregnancies, and tackling malnutrition they make sure mother and child in urban slums can grow up healthy and safe.*

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