

Date: 01/10/2026

Site: Samarpan

Location: Chhayos Café, IIT Delhi

Member: Prithvi

In my site visit, I talked to Meenakshi, a woman who works for (and essentially leads) Samarpan's projects in the greater Delhi area. The project is an initiative dedicated to supporting families in lasting ways: through making food available, supporting the education of children, and building lasting relationships with positive mentors. Samarpan has grown and scaled services over time, with a focus on working with families for extended periods of time.

The mission of Samarpan, and of Meenakshi Lal, is to connect families of prisoners and impoverished individuals to offer support in three areas: education, healthcare, and nutrition. Samarpan does less hands-on help in any one of these areas, but rather provides the infrastructure and scaffolding needed to grow these skills in the lives of those who benefit from Samarpan's services.

To begin with, Samarpan works closely to educate the children of prisoners and the poor. In particular, these families are often led by single mothers with multiple children, ranging from infancy to college age. With tuition support, supplies for education in both essential subjects and the arts, and college entrance fees, the children are free to focus on what is most important for their intellectual development. There are a few cases I want to highlight. One student has graduated college with a degree in computer science and has a job at Wipro, where he will bring in more money in one month than his family brings in a year. Another student has written a long-form poem which he will soon bind and publish, and I think this is the start of a career in journalism or poetry for this student. Another younger student, in middle school, showed his drawings which were made with the resources that Samarpan was able to provide. Generally, the students are on track for successful completion of their grades and into successful careers.

Samarpan also provides medical support and healthcare services for their beneficiaries. One case in particular I would like to highlight is the eye surgery of one of the women. She had a deficiency in an eye and resisted getting it checked out, but when Meenakshi found out, she promptly got the eye operated on and the woman had her vision in both eyes restored. This was one example of many, but generally Samarpan has helped the families out in a substantial way in terms of medical care. In addition, with the high number of women, Samarpan has helped and will continue to help in pregnancy-related procedures.

Finally, Samarpan ensures that the families are getting nutritious food which sets up a healthy mind and healthy body. Most recently, Meenakshi and her team have begun providing basic supplements and dry food supplies in order to take the burden off of the families to provide food

for themselves. Samarpan distributes food in a centralized location and the families come to pick it up (and if there is travel difficulty, Samarpan assists with this).

Every single individual there referenced Meenakshi as a sister or mother to them, and it was very clear that the efforts of the Samarpan team have not gone unnoticed. The project started off as something small, but the team has scaled up and more and more families have gotten access to Samarpan's help.

One piece of difficulty is that regardless of how great an initiative is, it is difficult to recruit help. Meenakshi works with a staff of volunteers and directs their resources and assistance accordingly, but it is still difficult to attend to every need of every family. Additionally, it is hard to provide personalized assistance in many cases; for example, it is difficult to provide unique food rations and supplements to everyone, so the aid isn't perfectly personalized. However, these are far overshadowed by the great things that Samarpan is doing.



