

BHARTIYA SAMAJ
CHARITABLE TRUST



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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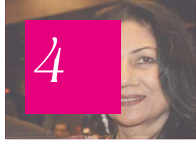
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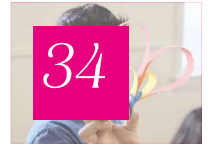
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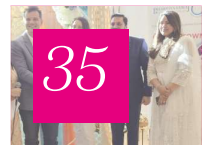
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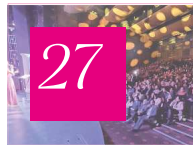
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Chairperson's Message

2023 marks Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust's 28th year of operations, making a positive difference in the lives of diverse communities in Aotearoa.

In 1995, we started with our mission to assist people in their times of need. Today, while we have almost completed three decades in the service, we have expanded to not only help people in times of need but also work towards creating happier and healthier communities in Aotearoa and Australia.

As we live through a period of considerable economic challenge, with rising cost of living and climate challenges placing people in acute distress, Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust has always been a central part of the collective response, helping those in need, offering distress support, courage and hope to the communities.

We ourselves face multiple challenges with ever increasing demand for our services, increased costs, and the real risk of declining community funding. However, with the contribution, passion, skill and commitment of our staff, trustees, board members and volunteers, we have been able to sail through.

It is often in the face of serious challenges that we can demonstrate our resilience, and our capacity to make a difference in the community.

With the help of our members, community, trustees, and volunteers, Bhartiya Samaj has demonstrated resilience and excellence for continuously delivering support services for senior citizens, children,

young people and migrants.

I take a lot of pride in the fact that we supported AEWV migrants who were recently reported to be living in inhumane conditions in Auckland.

Also, we demonstrated excellence in delivering support services to whānau of diverse communities during Auckland anniversary floods.

Besides, the trust has been supporting several victims of elder abuse and domestic violence, with help of other organisations including Roopa Aur Aap Charitable Trust.

Our fortnightly meetings for seniors have proved to be a platform for them to mingle in the community, learn something new and feel inclusive in New Zealand.

Bhartiya Samaj's digital classes for senior citizens are another great achievement of the trust as we helped many seniors become independent to use technology and digital tools.

Our Bal Vikas classes, conducted every Sunday, provide opportunities to Kiwi-Indian children to learn Hindi and Indian culture so they stay connected with their roots and take pride in their identities.

Most importantly, Bhartiya Samaj's expansion to Queenstown, Canterbury, Wellington & Manawatū, and Brisbane in Australia has provided us with several opportunities to offer support to communities irrespective of geographical location.

Once again, I would like to thank staff, trustees, board members,



and volunteers of BSCT for their support and active involvement in bringing courage, joy, and hope to communities.

Together we can and together we will!

Jeet Suchdev

Chairperson
Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust

Foreword

“तन से करो
या धन से करो,
सेवा करो तो
नसि्वार्थ
करो।”



As the popular Hindi idiom says, Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust lives upto the universal values of humanity and community service.

BSCT was set up with a vision to provide support to diverse communities, particularly the South Asian communities in New Zealand.

BSCT has grown tremendously over the past 28 years, supported by local and central government, and most importantly our volunteers, staff, trustees and board members. Be it senior citizen's meetings, childcare programmes or youth and migrant support initiatives, BSCT is a go-to organisation for people in distress.

In this difficult and uncertain economic climate, we feel responsible to continue supporting people who are affected by any sort of abuse, exploitation, health-related issues or education. We strive to provide the highest quality of service to address these pressing issues.

Bhartiya Samaj's most valuable assets are its members and the people who find solutions, hope

and joy by coming together. We know from experience that bringing people together creates synergies.

Post covid challenges, natural disasters and rising cost of living crisis pose major challenges for people. In these difficult times, we strive to bring communities together, and in cooperation with others stakeholders including Roopa Aur Aap Charitable Trust, we are working to solve the issues that currently confront communities in New Zealand and Australia.

Though BSCT has successfully been providing support to people from diverse communities, challenges to the well-being of children, youth and whānau remain and continue to emerge in new forms.

Therefore, it is significant we continue our preventive and developmental work in the community to advocate for those we serve and those without a voice of their own.

For the next year, we plan on expanding our operations to more geographical locations and internationally in various projects

including support to senior citizens, roll out children programmes in more regions of New Zealand. As we offer platforms, we seek support to improve the livelihood of diverse communities in Aotearoa.

With this, I invite BSCT members, trustees, board members, staff and volunteers to continue on this meaningful journey ahead with us.

Roopa Suchdev

Co-Founder & Trustee
Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust



RoopaAurAap Charitable Trust

Roopa Aur Aap Charitable Trust, established in 2008, is the legal face of CEO Roopa Suchdev's efforts to further her endeavour in helping those without a voice of their own.

Since 1996 Roopa Suchdev has been passionately working to help the victims of domestic abuse across New Zealand. She has been a famous Indian radio and television personality in New Zealand.

RAA continues its venture through its tenacious team members working towards its mission of developing a society nurturing and empowering individuals reach their ultimate potential. RAA focuses on the development of the members of the South Asian Community who face inequality and violence.

The aim is to provide free counselling, offer interventions programmes to the victims of domestic abuse, and resolve family disputes with help of qualified and certified experts.

Our Support Services

1

Culturally-appropriate Counselling/ Mediation

RAA provides a range of therapeutic services and acts as a compassionate facilitator, who are experts in providing culturally-appropriate services to the families. We also provide post traumatic solutions as a part of recovery and resilience.

2

Community Services

RAA conducts several campaigns to create awareness and positively change the way people think & act on family harm. During the pandemic, RAA raised awareness about the benefits of getting vaccinated & also provided RAT kits, food parcels, medicines and other essential goods to hundreds of people to fight with covid in New Zealand.

8

Awareness campaigns & Education Workshops

RAA conducts regular education workshops at various locations to create awareness on several social issues. These workshops encourage people to stand up for themselves and lead an independent life. Various activities/classes are also undertaken including English speaking lessons, computer skills, gardening, sewing, information on managing the finances to help the clients/ victims to be up to date.

3

Crisis Intervention

We have well-crafted intervention system in place for victims of family violence. Through our services, we try to determine options to resolve the conflict, and counsel the victim as well as the perpetrator to help stabilise their emotions, enabling them to thrive in the face of chronic stress. It assists in reducing the incidences of family harm and forms a strong family bond.

4

Legal Support

We have professional lawyers on board who assist and guide the victims about the civil and criminal legal matters. We help victims engage with the lawyers who help them resolve legal issues and issues relating to immigration.

5

Immigration Support

We provide support on immigration matters with the help of certified immigration advisers. These immigration adviser guide the victims / clients obtain their visas.

6

Elder Abuse Awareness

In collaboration with Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust, we carry out interactive workshops & activities for seniors to spread elder abuse awareness.

9

Children Programmes

In collaboration with Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust and other community organisations, we organise workshops for children during summer holidays and school breaks. Also, RAA provides support to children who have been the victims of family violence.

7

Outreach services beyond New Zealand

Our services extend to those beyond New Zealand. Often, victims are not the only ones affected by violence, but also those related to them. RAA ensures that its actions have far-reaching impact and, therefore, we provide service to the victims' families in other countries as well.

BSCT Team

FOUNDERS & TRUSTEES



Jeet Suchdev QSM JP



Roopa Suchdev QSM



Dr Bruce Hucker
QSO



Dr Ashraf Choudhary
QSO, Ex MP

TRUSTEES



Roshni Chadha



Ami Chand QSM



Harish Lodhia

BHARTIYA SAMAJ CHAPTER'S PRESIDENTS



Mangal Behal
Queenstown



Surinder Tandon
Canterbury



Abhishek Sharma
Brisbane, Australia



Rishi Sharma
Wellington & Manawatu

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS



Rushikesh Ahinave



Santanu Roy



Garry Gupta



Jaspreet Singh Kandhari



Ansh Chadha



Simran Chadha



Ranjana Gupta



Prashant Vijan



Vanitha Kalra



Ghouse Majeed

STAFF & VOLUNTEERS



Gurpreet Kaur



Kanika Ranga



Gurdev Kuka



Mita Suchdev



Our Services



Senior Citizen Wing

Mutual support and companionship for the Senior citizens through regular get togethers/programs, festival celebrations, recreational outings, Skill development programs and other services making them socially inclusive,connected, strong and confident. To empower them and enhance their skills we constantly keep adding new programs for their benefit.



Children & Youth Wing

Multicultural Playgroup for children from 0-5 years, where young children and their mothers get a space to express their creative play capabilities and have a safe space for learning and socializing. Language and Cultural classes, Annual summer camp and Holiday Programme for Children 6- 14 years for building and nurturing skills, values and attributes of self-awareness, self-management and responsible decision making. It also helps them to keep them connected with their cultural roots thereby helping in stronger family bonds.



Migrant Settlement & Distress Support

Assisting New Migrants to settle down in New Zealand by providing them with relevant information and resources. To ensure the wellbeing of the people and community, we offer support and professional advice to people in distressed situations. Provide social services by resolving issues such as family harm, elder abuse by assisting them in seeking counselling, legal help and advocacy support.



Culturally Appropriate Care Home

To address the cultural needs of older people requiring rest home care, we collaborated with Bupa at David Lange Care Home to launch a culturally appropriate Aashirwad Wing for the South Asian Communities in 1995. Community development programs through partnerships with other government/local organisations like Auckland Council, Wastewise, Electoral Commission and many more.



Eva Mueller/Stuff

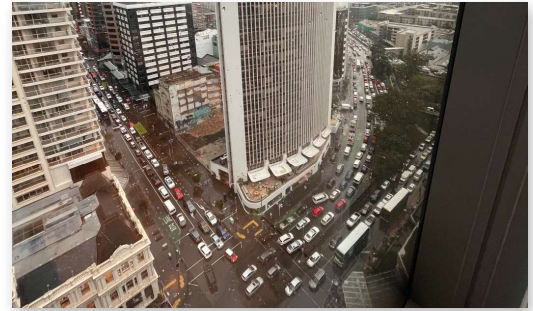


@MonteChristoNZ/Reuters

Sailing through Auckland Floods



Fiona Goodall/Getty Images



Tom Kennedy/RNZ

With regular visits to several emergency management centres, Bhartiya Samaj's community drive in Auckland was one of the biggest initiatives to support Auckland Flood victims.

A team of dedicated volunteers from Auckland Indian Diaspora, Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust, and Roopa Aur Aap Charitable Trust sprung into action as soon as news reports of people getting affected by floods in Auckland surfaced in January 2023.

The team has been spending hours identifying the need of emergency supplies and goods at emergency management centres and providing the flood victims with the supplies they need.

Volunteers at Massey's Albany Campus were equally surprised when they received vegetarian Indian food including dal, rice and pakoras for their residents from Gurdwara Sahib North Shore.

"We are thankful to the team of volunteers who popped up just in time to give tasty food for the people living here. People and volunteers just enjoyed everything," said a volunteer at Massey Albany campus emergency management centre, requesting anonymity.

A family of four at Kelston emergency management centre were looking for some vegetarian food. Their home was flooded so badly that they couldn't take anything along.

The Bhartiya Samaj team has supplied several emergency supplies including food, toiletries, personal hygiene products, female sanitary products, under garments, cleaning supplies and cardboard boxes at Massey's Albany Centre, St. Leonards Road School, Kelston

Centre and the Wesley Primary School centre.

The distribution of supplies has been made possible with the support and contribution from Foundation North, and volunteering team from Auckland Indian Diaspora, Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust, Roopa Aur Aap Charitable Trust and The Parakeets.



Stuff



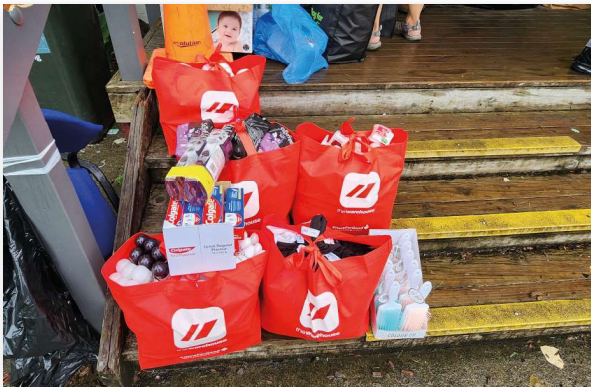
Hannah Peters/Getty Images



Reuters



Luka Forman/RNZ



Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust is 🥰 feeling motivated at Wesley Primary School. ...
 Published by Shilpy Arora · 31 January · Auckland · 🌐

Day 1 & Day 2 of community spirit of Indian Diaspora

Thanks to Foundation North, Auckland Indian Diaspora & Roopa Aur Aap Charitable Trust for supporting and encouraging us to take you the most important volunteering and donation initiative in Auckland.

Our team sprung into action as soon as news reports of people getting affected by flash floods in Auckland surfaced. Our volunteers continue to pour their hearts out for #Auckland and be there for those affected by the #auck... See more

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Wesley Primary School · Following
 Thank you for supporting our community

Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust is 🥰 feeling motivated at Wesley Primary School.
 Published by Shilpy Arora · 31 January · Auckland · 🌐

Day 1 & Day 2 of community spirit of Indian Diaspora

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Write a comment...

Fiona Lai
 Thank you, Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust . You guys have been amazing and supporting The ARK Collective - Act of Roskill Kindness ❤️❤️🙏

Love Reply Hide 32w



Championing Covid Elimination & Flu Prevention

The last two years have been extremely challenging for the community due to the Covid pandemic and lockdowns as many people struggled with health issues, loss of family members and friends, loss of jobs, stress, anxiety, depression and financial crisis.

Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust identified the challenges as soon as the first lockdown was implemented in New Zealand in 2020. The organisation provided all the support needed by the community as soon as lockdowns were announced in 2020.

The management and volunteers of the organisation

worked tirelessly to spread awareness about various guidelines issued by the government, reduce health inequity during pandemic and ensure community well-being during the hard time.

Assistance was also provided to tourists unable to leave New Zealand: During the first lockdown in 2020, Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust worked closely with the High Commission of India, the Consulate of India in Auckland and Indian Diaspora to provide assistance to tourists from South Asia who were in New Zealand for holiday and/or work. The organisation provided assistance to the affected whanau by providing

them emergency shelter, food, essential supplies, etc. Many families with young children and elderly were unable to leave New Zealand due to sudden lockdown and unavailability of flights. Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust worked as an important point of contact between the High Commission of India and the community.

Distribution of food, clothing, and essential supplies: The first lockdown was extremely difficult for the community, especially for vulnerable groups such as senior citizens, children, people with special needs and minority groups. Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust made sure families have



We are proud that the Indian community is one of the first ethnic communities in New Zealand to get vaccinated as soon as the covid vaccination drive was rolled out.



enough supply of food and essential items. Several families were provided with food boxes and cash vouchers handed over by volunteers. Apart from this, several food distribution drives were organised along with Indian Consulate in Auckland while strictly adhering to the government's social distancing rules, and contactless delivery. The organisation provided thousands of food vouchers to families in diverse communities in Auckland. We also worked closely with Auckland Council and other agencies including St John, Salvation Army, and PillDrop to provide families with supplies of food, essential goods and medicines.

Awareness drives to get the community vaccinated: Bhartiya Samaj Charitable trust is proud

that the Indian community is one of the first ethnic communities in New Zealand to get vaccinated as soon as the covid vaccination drive was rolled out. Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust worked with several other organisations and the New Zealand government to raise awareness among the community over the benefits of getting vaccinated. We made the community aware through various online sessions, awareness campaigns on our social media platforms, and several one-on-one conversations through phone calls, messages and emails to spread the awareness.

Most importantly, Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust provided a "vaccine bus", a transport from their homes to the vaccination

centres while adhering strictly to the distancing rules of the government. The community was encouraged to get vaccinated, download Covid tracing app in their mobile phones and scan the Covid code wherever they go. Special sessions with experts, health practitioners and community leaders were organised to let people know the importance of vaccination, contact tracing and merits in following the norms and guidelines issued by the New Zealand government.

In 2023, a flu prevention vaccination drive was carried out during one of the fortnightly meetings of Bhartiya Samaj's seniors. Health and well-being of the community have always been the trusts' foremost commitments.

Outcome 1

Digital Future For All Ages!

BSCT digital literacy classes provide an opportunity to senior citizens to become technologically confident via a digital skills training programme.



Seniors at Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust started a new term of the Digital Learning lessons through Digital Inclusion Alliance Aotearoa. A class for beginners that takes place at 3pm every Wednesday, saw a big turn out wherein members learned the basics to operate their smartphone. They will also be guided on how to safeguard their phones from

others & learn how to use it to stay connected with their friends and families.

An Advanced class takes place at 9am every Wednesday.

Seniors learn what Cyber Bullying is and acquire skills to navigate their ways to avoid online scams, phishing, and online frauds, and how to safeguard themselves online.

Mentor Leilani Ji said she

felt confident that both the batches would soon complete all the levels making them digitally robust in Aotearoa.

The then Minister of Seniors, Ginny Anderson says, being online is increasingly important for seniors to participate in modern life.



“From doing banking online to staying in touch with grandchildren, we want to make sure our seniors have access to all that modern technology offers,” Andersen said.

“As many as one in four older people do not access the internet regularly.

“The programmes focus on supporting older people to develop the skills to get online safely and confidently.”



Outcome 2

At forefront to support migrants

Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust sprung into action as soon as the news of AEWV migrants' exploitation in Auckland was reported in August 2023.

The migrant workers came to New Zealand under the Accredited Employer Work Visa programme, with a dream of supporting their families and finding work, often spending their life savings to do so. But when they arrived, the agents they had paid were nowhere to be seen, nor were the jobs.

The 13 men were sharing two small rooms, sleeping on bunk beds with barely any food available

and unhygienic living conditions.

The migrants were scammed as they paid out of tens of thousands of dollars for the promise of work in New Zealand but did not find any jobs and left to live inhumane conditions.

Bhartiya Samaj's chairperson Jeet Suchdev, who is also a convenor of the United Voice, worked in close coordination with other community members and the officials of the High

Commission of India in New Zealand and the Indian consulate in Auckland demanding support and working towards the welfare of scammed migrants.

United Voice continued helping distribute supplies to the victims on behalf of the Indian High Commission.

Jeet Suchdev said, "It is shocking to see migrants living in such conditions that are not appropriate for human living.





When I first visited them, they cried and did not even have food to eat. They were living in conditions that are not fit for human beings. We assured the community is with them.

“With the help of the Indian High Commission and the members of United Voice, we supported the migrants with essential items such as food. We are glad that the Immigration Minister has assured to look into the matter and help

migrants with employment.”

“We also have to make sure sure they don’t do anything silly.”

Immigration New Zealand (INZ) officials have been investigating, following the reports of 144 Indian and Bangladeshi migrants living in cramped and unsanitary conditions in some houses across Auckland.

Jeet Suchdev said, “There is an urgent need to reach out to the potential victims of exploitation

from all 188 accredited employers.”

The Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) is a temporary work visa category introduced by the New Zealand Government to address labour shortages post-Covid. However, following these revelations, the Immigration Minister has ordered a review of the scheme.



Blessen Tom/RNZ

“

When I first visited them, they cried and did not even have food to eat. They were living in conditions that were not fit for human beings – Jeet Suchdev, Convenor, United Voice

Outcome 3

Providing housing support to elders

Some of the most challenging issues faced by senior citizens are family harm and financial abuse.

Bhartiya Samaj has supported many seniors including individuals and couples get independent & affordable housing ensuring their health and wellbeing.

Tanushree (name changed) was so excited when her daughter called her from New Zealand. Her daughter was pregnant and she was invited to New Zealand to welcome her grandson and enjoy time with the family in Aotearoa.

As soon as she arrived in New Zealand, her daughter gave birth to a baby boy. It was probably the best moment of Tanushree's life. She invested all her time, effort and love in raising her grandson and taking care of the family.

As years passed by and her grandson started going to school, Tanushree felt a void and a feeling of loneliness grew as her grandsons

spent time at school and her daughter and son-in-law were busy at work. She noticed a change in the behaviour of her daughter and son-in-law. She faced financial abuse as her daughter used her retirement funds and forced to share her bank account details.

Tanushree couldn't go back to India because most of her family members in India were busy in their own lives. She did not know anyone, apart from her daughter, in New Zealand.

Tanushree said, "The situation was so bad I felt like committing suicide. My own daughter betrayed me. She broke my trust. My son-in-law verbally

abused me. I had nowhere to go. I felt stuck at my daughter's house."

"All these years, I was busy in raising my grandson and never got time to form any social circle in New Zealand," she said.

Tanushree had no friends, no partner, nobody who she could seek support from. However, she knew a neighbour who was a member of Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust. When nothing worked out, she contacted the neighbour.

"Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust took an immediate action. They provided support like I was their own family member."

"I started going to their



Photo by Leeder Bose on Unsplash

fortnightly seniors' meetings and was amazed to see so much excitement among seniors. I made several friends. I got all the support, be it food, medicines and even housing.

"I think the best thing Bhartiya Samaj has done to me is to help connect me with relevant agencies to get an affordable house. I have a house of my own now. I feel so independent. I don't depend on anyone, thanks to Bhartiya Samaj."

Jeet Suchdev said, "If there is any dispute at home and if seniors face any sort of abuse, we go to the providers including Kāinga Ora and Haumarū Housing that are leading agencies to provide housing

to the needy."

"We talk to them and with their cooperation we get accommodation at a reasonable rent that seniors can afford."

Jeet Suchdev said affordable and independent housing makes seniors feel safe, secure and independent. "In most cases, seniors suffer at the hands of their own family members. They face family harm, emotional and verbal abuse, and financial abuse.

"However, when their housing need is met, they live their lives on their own terms. It helps in improving their mental and physical health, and emotional well being," he said.

Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust has supported many seniors including individuals and couples get independent houses, with help of Kāinga Ora and Haumarū Housing.

Bhartiya Samaj makes sure they check upon wellbeing of seniors from time to time. "Our role is not limited to provide them housing. They become part of our Bhartiya Samaj family and it is our responsibility to continue to check upon their wellbeing and health. We provide them all the support needed and connect them with leading agencies if they need any further support," said Jeet Suchdev.

Outcome 4

UNITED VOICE advocating migrants' concerns



While the Labour Party promised a 10-year multiple-entry Super Visa that will allow relatives to make successive visits of between 6 months and 5 years, ACT's Unite Visa will enable relatives to visit family in New Zealand for up to five years at a time, with a renewal requirement each year.

Thanks to the efforts of United Voice - an advocacy group supported by 160 community organisations representing diverse migrant communities across New Zealand. The group has been taking concerns of migrants over parental policies for a long time with the government.

Those on the visa would

need a written guarantee of financial support from their children or grandchildren, who must be a New Zealand citizen.

They would also need health insurance for the entirety of their stay and meet good character requirements. Labour Party said the Super Visa would not count towards any pathway to residency.

In recent run up to Elections 2023 campaign, major political parties including ACT New Zealand, Green Party, Labour Party and National Party - have all launched immigration policies to support parents and grandparents of migrants, thanks to United Voice.

United Voice is an advocacy group supported by 160 community organisations representing diverse migrant communities across New Zealand.

Parents and grandparents on ACT's Unite Visa will have to pay an annual \$3500 fee to cover potential health costs.

"There's no question that the fee is significant and there are some people who will be deterred from coming by the fee, on the other hand I don't think the taxpayer should have to pay," said ACT leader David Seymour.

The National Party's immigration policy will allow relatives to visit family members in New Zealand for five years, with the possibility of renewal for another five years.

National said those on the new Parent Visa Boost would need to be sponsored by their children or grandchildren, and would not be eligible for NZ Super or other entitlements and would have to have health insurance.

At the moment, a general visitor visa allows a stay of up to 12 months, but it does not allow flexibility to leave the country and come back.

If someone makes multiple journeys, parents and grandparents

can only visit for up to six months at a time, with a maximum total stay of 18 months in three years.

A residency visa is also available, but migrants must meet income eligibility thresholds.

The Labour Party also announced a one-off regularisation programme for overstayers who have been in New Zealand for 10 years or more. It said this was to honour the historic Dawn Raids apology to Pacific people by backing it up with action.

However, the programme would not be limited to any particular group, meaning people from all migrant communities will be able to apply to regularise their visa status.

"These people are part of New Zealand. In some cases they have been here for decades. They have family here, jobs and church," said Labour's immigration spokesperson Andrew Little.

"It's only fair that children born in this country aren't held back from making the most of their own lives, because of their parents' irregular visa status. That

is why regularisation will not be limited to any particular group, meaning people from all migrant communities will be able to apply.

"About 14,000 to 20,000 people could be eligible for regularisation, including every survivor of the Dawn Raids era who has never left the country. It means they will have rights at work and access to more government services like higher education," Little said.

Chris Hipkins said the overstayer regularisation programme was "the right thing to do" to huge applause and some tears in the crowd.

He said the party would deliver the policy within the first 100 days in office, but he admitted he did not actually know how many migrant overstayers there were.

The Green Party said they would ensure that an amnesty for overstayers provides accessible residency pathways to everyone, not just those who've been here more than 10 years.

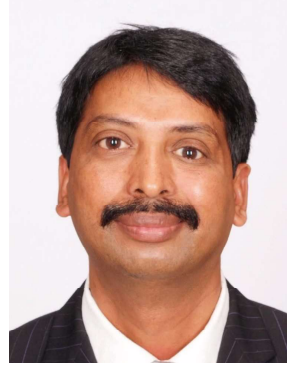




Jeet Suchdev QSM JP,
Convener



Daljit Singh



Ghouse Majeed



Gurdeep Singh Talwar

UNITED

United Voice is a group representing several registered community organisations & nearly all ethnicities living in New Zealand. It was formed in 2020 to raise concerns over several migrants stuck overseas.

Supreme Sikh Society of NZ, along with 20 other Sikh Organisations | South Asian Leadership New Zealand | New Zealand Indian Central Association (20 affiliated branches and associated member organisations) | New Zealand Chinese Association | Mr. Bhav Dhillon (Supporting in personal capacity) | NZ Punjabi Multimedia Trust | Waitakere Ethnic Board | MANA-Andhra Telugu Association New Zealand (MATA NZ) | NZ Telugu Association | Migrant Careers Support Trust | The Asian Network Incorporated (TANI) | Auckland Tamil Association Inc | Roopa Aur Aap Charitable Trust | Way of Life Foundation | Telangana Association of NZ | Pakistan Association of New Zealand | New Zealand Kannada Koota | Telangana Jagruthi NZ | Aotearoa Resettled Community Coalition (ARCC) | Korean Society of Auckland Inc | Christchurch Multicultural Council | Gujarati Samaj New Zealand Inc | NZ Indian Business Association | Auckland Indian Association | Bangladesh New Zealand Friendship Society Inc (BNZFS) | Migrants United Council Inc. | Yogi



Jaspreet Singh Kandhari



Narinder Singh Warraich



Navtej Randhawa

VOICE

United Voice has come up as an important advocacy group to raise concerns of migrants and ethnic communities in the government, and seek assurance and a fair-solution from the government.

Divine Society NZ | Indian Global Business Chambers | Waitakere Indian Association Migration Experts | GOPIO Auckland South Chapter | Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust | Chinmaya Mission New Zealand | Woman Care Trust | Urdu Hindi Cultural Association | Sahaayta New Zealand | Chinese New Settlers Services Trust | Biz Whiz Advisors & Training Ltd | Communities Action Trust | NZ Indian Senior Citizens Inc. | NZ Sikh Women's Association | Indian Association Manukau NZ | Auckland Marathi Mandal | Auckland City Multiethnic Council | Professional Visa Solutions | Gandhi Niwas | Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust Queenstown | GOPIO Auckland Central Chapter | Nepalese Cultural Centre- New Zealand Inc. | Naree Women's Group | Multicultural New Zealand | Migrant Heritage Charitable Trust Inc. | Canterbury Punjabi Association | Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at New Zealand Inc. | BAPS Shri Swaminarayan mandir | Gimit Association | MoreForKidz | Lions Club Of Remuera | Immigration Youth | Haryana Federation

Seniors on High Seas



Whether it is watching sunset in the middle of the Pacific Ocean or cruising by a city's skyline, nothing can beat the unique perspective a cruise gives.

More than 200 Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust's seniors embarked journey of a lifetime as they were onboard a Pacific cruise from Auckland to Auckland.

For many, it was a journey of a lifetime - a perfect opportunity to enjoy life at sea, enjoy a plethora of activities and mix and mingle with their friends and family.

Organised by Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust, it was the

first cruise trip post Covid where seniors had a blast enjoying music, Bollywood dance, and games including Tambola and Antakshari. The cruise was full of activities from when one wakes up to when it's time to go to bed.

It was a perfect opportunity for the seniors to have fun and relax with their friends and family.

Chairperson of Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust Jeet Suchdev, who accompanied the seniors on the cruise, said, "Cruises are an incredible way to see the beauty of the Pacific Ocean while still having all the comforts of home."

P&O Cruises made sure seniors don't miss Indian food on the cruise so they arranged both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food options catering to the needs of Bhartiya Samaj's seniors.

The cruise was truly an opportunity to bring out an overwhelming sense of joy and smiles on the faces of seniors onboard.

It was a time to come together and celebrate the community on cruise.



It was a journey of a lifetime – a perfect opportunity to enjoy life, a plethora of activities and mix & mingle with their friends and family.

2023 Events Line-up



Age Concern Workshop

An Age Concern workshop aiming to reduce fall risk among senior citizens was well received by Bhartiya Samaj's seniors and helped them understand various fall prevention steps and measures.

Divya Seth ji from Age Concern Auckland took a workshop organised by Roopa Aur Aap Charitable Trust in collaboration with Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust. She took senior members through an interesting presentation on Steady Steps.



I-Day 2023 Celebrations



Indian Diaspora celebrated India's Independence Day celebrations at Mahatma Gandhi Centre in Auckland.



The community, dignitaries and Indian Diaspora attended the significant occasion for our Indian democracy.

Simran Chadha, Prajita Sarkari and Sheetul Bisnauthsing gave an outstanding performance. Bhartiya Samaj is proud to receive an acknowledgment for their performance.



International Yoga Day

Honourable High Commissioner of India Her Excellency Mrs.

Neeta Bhushan ji came all the way to Auckland on the occasion of International Yoga Day.

The community got an opportunity to celebrate International Yoga Day with her.

"You truly inspired us to take care of our physical and mental health, and overall well-being through yoga," said Jeet Suchdev.





Matariki Celebrations



Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust members celebrated Matariki amidst music, dance and a lot of learning about Māori culture.

Puketāpapa Local Board's chairperson Ella Kumar ji spoke about significance of Māori culture in Aotearoa and the world.

The members enjoyed a series of singing performances by a Māori family who was kind enough to enlighten the gathering about their culture and traditions.

Kahtleen Williams, who performed with her children and grand children at the meeting, said

her children have been performing kapa haka since they were born.

"On that day, my babies enjoyed their selves. Thank you so much for caring for us. You have a lot of humble people that I enjoyed. We had an elder come to see us. He was a teacher, he said he was in tears so that made me feel so honoured to perform in front of them all," she said.

The family also exhibited many artifacts and items of cultural significance.

Bhartiya Samaj family thanked Kathleen and her whānau who gave a captivating

performance.

Jeet Suchdev said, "Several communities including Indian and other South Asian communities have always been inspired by the Māori culture. Matariki is a time when they celebrate new year, and it is an opportunity for us to know more about the Māori culture and traditions."

Kapa haka, followed by a dance performance of two 13-year-old young females was absolutely enthralling.

Promoting well-being on Elder Abuse Awareness Day



More than 200 members of Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust came together to mark World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

An address by India's Honourary Consul in Auckland Bhav Dhillon ji and New Zealand Police's Ethnic Responsiveness Manager for Metro Auckland Jessica Phuang ji helped seniors know about the support available to them in case they face elder abuse.

A skit presented by Surinder Kaur ji, Urmila Seth ji and Roopa Suchdev ji raised awareness on the issue of elder abuse. Another short skit presented by Gurdev ji, Neelam Wadhwa ji and Mita Suchdev ji was also well received by the gathering.

Seniors watched a 15-minute movie that helped them understand how some seniors face elder abuse after moving to Aotearoa and how can they seek support in the community.

Nepal's Honourary Consul in Auckland Dinesh Khadka JP, Sergeant Andrew Lee, Auckland District Commander Superintendent Karyn Malthus and President of Puketapapa Local Board Ella Kumar ji also

addressed the gathering.

A melodious rendition presented by Sudha ji and Rushikesh ji thoroughly entertained the attendees.

The aim to of the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is to promote an understanding of the importance of preventing elder abuse and supporting the rights and well-being of older people.



Celebrating life with dance & music!

Music, dance and laughter has always been an important part of Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust's fortnightly meeting.

The meeting starts with ritual prayers, followed by a workout session and birthday celebrations of seniors.

A group of seniors dance as some members including Dhansukh bhai ji, Jagdish Punia ji, and Rushikesh Ahinave ji take to the mic.



Bollywood music for good cause at SkyCity



Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust was an important part of a Bollywood musical organised by Roopa Aur Aap Charitable Trust along with singer Gopal Bhatia ji at Auckland's SkyCity Theatre. Roopa Aur Aap Charitable Trust's mission to serve the community pulled hundreds of people to enjoy Bollywood music for a good cause

A talented team of singers and musicians including well-known Gopal Bhatia ji rocked the stage before enthused Bollywood lovers. Singers enthralled dignitaries and hundreds of Hindi music lovers with hits of legendary Bollywood actor Rajesh Khanna. Gopal Bhatia ji set the stage on fire with his pulsating and vociferous musical performance.

The aim of the event was to raise awareness on domestic violence and autism in the community.



Energy & Excitement beam at South Auckland



Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust's South Auckland's monthly meetings offer a positive and joyful experience to senior members, fostering a sense of togetherness.

Workout session taken by Mohini Ji allows the attendees to find inner peace and be physically fit. It is generally followed by birthday celebrations of elderly recognising their valuable contributions and life

experiences.

Various activities including Tambola and Antakshari fill the atmosphere with energy and excitement.

The meetings are perfect opportunities for the Bhartiya Samaj's senior members to strengthen their bonds and cherish each other's company.



Holidaying in Rotorua



Nearly 100 members of Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust enjoyed a three-day trip to Rotorua last week in March 2023.

The fun-filled first trip after the pandemic took seniors to a range of places including Blue Lake, Green Lake, Lake Tarawera, Ōkāreka and Kuirau Park.

The fun trip started on March 11, 2023 with seniors starting their journey in the morning from

Gurudwara Sahib Takanini. Guru Ka Langar (a delicious meal) served in the Gurudwara made the perfect lunch for the senior travellers.

The seniors received a warm welcome at VR Rotorua Lake Resort where they relaxed for a day.

The next day was packed with several fun activities that provided a great chance to everyone to know each other, coming from different communities, backgrounds

and ages. Sightseeing provided an ideal opportunity for them to immerse in the natural beauty of Rotorua.

The trip concluded with the members visiting Hamilton Gardens and Hamilton Gurudwara.

Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust's founder and chairperson Jeet Suchdev said such trips were great opportunities for members to get to know each other and relax.

"This was a much-awaited trip after almost two years. Traveling together is the best way to unwind, make memories and see things differently. The trip was organised keeping in mind the overall well-being of seniors."

"The idea of such a trip helps senior members set goals and do things they always wanted to do for themselves," said Roopa Aur Aap Charitable Trust's chairperson Roshni Chadha ji.



Generations came together to celebrate Diwali 2022



Fiji's national anthem, India's national anthem and New Zealand's national anthem.

The event concluded with a round of delectable refreshments, offering an opportunity to the two generations to spend quality time with each other.

The event was organized by Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust in collaboration with Papatoetoe North School.

In 1995, Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust collaborated with David Lange Care Home to launch a culturally appropriate Aashirwad Wing for the South Asian communities.

As a tradition of Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust, a Diwali celebration is every year hosted at Bupa's David Lange Care Home for the seniors residing in the retirement village.

Students from Papatoetoe North School had a privilege to celebrate Diwali with seniors at the rest home in 2022.

The event provided an opportunity to a group of students, led by Sheetal Singh, to showcase their talent to seniors, while seniors offered their love, warm embrace, and compliments to the young performers.

The students entertained the seniors and sang



Meri Kirihimete 2022!



It was great to see Bhartiya Samaj's seniors decked up in bright clothes, adorning red and green, and big smiles on their faces.

Khote Sikke group performed and generations shook a leg together to celebrate Christmas 2022 and welcome new year 2023.

Seniors from diverse communities came together and made Christmas 2022 a memorable event.



Celebrating Asian diversity at New Zealand Parliament



The event saw dance performances from countries of South Asia and Southeast Asia including Myanmar and Thailand, and different states of India including Karnataka, Punjab, Gujarat and Kerala, along with a unique fashion show fostering cultural pride.

Former Minister of Transport, Immigration and Minister of Auckland Michael Wood ji said, “My warmest greeting to the communities and mother tongues of people of South Asia and Southeast Asia who are here to [celebrate and take part in their new year

celebrations].”

MP Vanushi Walters ji said such a festival could only be organised in a “diverse” and “multicultural” country like New Zealand.

Communities Action Trust New Zealand’s (CATNZ’s) Founder Murali Kumar JP says the purpose of such event was to ensure social cohesion and reflect cultural diversity South Asian and Southeast Asian communities bring to New Zealand. “We received a phenomenal response this time with diverse communities taking part in the event as performers and attendees. It has truly become

an event that brings together wider Indian communities, and other communities of South Asia and Southeast Asia.”

“This event lets us enjoy the unity and celebrate the diversity New Zealand has.”

Calling it one-of-its-kind festivals celebrated at the Parliament, Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust’s Founder and Chairperson Jeet Suchdev said, “Earlier, we used to celebrate a pan India new year event. However, we decided to expand the event to many South Asian and Southeast Asian communities as they celebrate their new year at the same time.”

Organised by Communities Action Trust New Zealand (CATNZ) and Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust, the celebrations go a long way in building Aotearoa as an equitable society and as a nation where people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds feel inclusive.





ANZAC Day at Mt Roskill



Members and volunteers of Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust and Roopa Aur Aap Charitable Trust braved the chilly April morning to gather at Mt Roskill War Memorial to take part in an ANZAC Day parade and services. Bhartiya Samaj thanked all its members, members of public, school students, dignitaries and other communities who took part in the parade and services.

Anzac Day is observed on April 25 every year. It commemorates New Zealanders killed in war and honours returned and serving servicemen and women.





“

★★★★★

I find the entire framework of this program very thoughtful and engaging. It helps our kids learn about our culture, helps them connect with other kids from our community.

Tejal
A PARENT

”

★★★★★

“
Very productive class and best platform for kids to learn about our culture and language. All the teachers are very helpful and supportive and communicates very well with parents and kids

says
Tamanna Phogat
A Parent

Variety in knowledge provided and encouragement given to specific skills of the kids

Vidhya
A Parent

★★★★★

Summer Camp for Little Champs!

Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust's summer camp is one of the much-awaited events. Children over 5 years take part in a range of activities including dance, music, art, craft & sports.

For more information, call - 021 665 609



BHARTIYA SAMAJ
CHARITABLE TRUST



BAL VIKAS

CULTURAL & LANGUAGE CLASSES

EVERY SUNDAY 

10:30am - 1:30pm



BSCT HALL

May Road,
Mt Roskill, Auckland



FREE CLASSES

For registration, call
0220398563 / 096200579

The classes include teaching language, imparting cultural knowledge and inculcating interpersonal skills.

The hallmark of Bal Vikas Classes is that the programme is conducted under the guidance of Education Chairperson Ms Roopa Suchdev QSM, by teachers who are very knowledgeable, sincere, devoted and have tremendous commitment. The classes aim to foster overall personality development, discipline and cultivation of humility, respect, core human values and selfless service.

www.bsct.org.nz

Mindfulness at core in BSCT Wellington & Manawatū

Bhartiya Samaj Wellington & Manawatū Charitable Trust has made significant strides in promoting mindfulness and well-being within the community, besides celebrating cultures, and organising dance workshops and art & craft activities.



In the wake of the past few stressful years, Bhartiya Samaj Wellington and Manawatū charitable trust has rolled out workshops to promote well-being in communities.

The Central New Zealand chapter offered its first workshop in March 2023 just one month after its official launch at the High Commission of India, Wellington.

The mindfulness workshops, organised for all age groups, help connect people to self-awareness. Simple meditation techniques and inspirational sessions let participants develop skills to pay attention to their well-being.

Mindfulness is the practice of giving our full open-hearted attention to what is immediately occurring, physically and mentally, both within and around us.

Taking mindfulness beyond meditation, Bhartiya Samaj Wellington and Manawatū has been offering free

of cost health awareness workshops, dance sessions and art & craft activities that help participants alleviate stress, boost memory, and build stronger relationships with diverse communities.

These workshops have become an avenue for diverse communities of Wellington to come together with their friends and whanau, enabling a better understanding of varied cultures.

Bhartiya Samaj Wellington and Manawatū Charitable Trust's president Rishi Sharma said mindfulness is at the core of all workshops, activities and events organised by his chapter.

"Bhartiya Samaj Wellington and Manawatū Trust has made significant strides in promoting mindfulness & well-being within the community. Our efforts to engage various groups, particularly children and youth, have been successful, and we have received positive feedback from participants," he said.

Shashi Patel ji, a regular attendee said, "I've learned how to meditate without feeling annoyed and stressed about my mind wandering."

"The session was informative and enjoyable. Through the sessions, I have learned how to calm my mind," said another regular attendee Neha Bhati ji.

Rishi Sharma thanked the communities, chapter's members and volunteers who tirelessly work to make the workshops successful every month.

Bhartiya Samaj's Wellington & Manawatū team believes mindfulness will go a long way building resilient & happy communities in the region.

Bhartiya Samaj Wellington & Manawatū Charitable Trust, along with Rotary Club of Feilding Oroua is going to organise Feilding's first Diwali in November 2023.



Bhartiya Samaj Queenstown achieving new milestones



Bhartiya Samaj Queenstown Charitable Trust is well-known for organising South Island's biggest Diwali celebrations.

Every year, Queenstown Diwali brings together South Island's diverse communities amid art, culture, dance, music, food, and lights. More than 1500 people attended Queenstown Diwali 2022, which was a free, family-friendly.

Bhartiya Samaj's Queenstown chapter achieved new milestones by organising varied workshops this year. The trust's esteemed member Nidhi Singh ji organised a Bollywood dance workshop for children to raise awareness about Indian culture

and heritage.

The charitable trust also organised meditation workshops to ensure well-being of women in Queenstown.

Bhartiya Samaj Queenstown Charitable Trust's president Mangal Behal said the charity, along with social enterprise The Parakeets, is excited to bring New Zealand's first environmentally sustainable Diwali celebrations to Queenstown.

"This year's Queenstown Diwali will spread awareness about environmental protection and responsible tourism.

"Queenstown is a tourist town. Being a resident of one of the world's most beautiful tourist towns, we believe it is our responsibility to

give back to the nature. There can't be a better opportunity to do this than Diwali celebrations attended by thousands of people every year."

He said Diwali celebrations let communities educate their younger generation about their culture, and take them closer to their roots and identities.

"With the sustainability message, Diwali celebrations become all the more fun and more meaningful. We are expecting more than 2500 people to attend and watch culturally diverse performances. All the communities are welcome to celebrate Diwali in Queenstown," said Poonam Sethi, Vice President of Bhartiya Samaj Queenstown Charitable Trust.

Empowering Migrants in Brisbane



More than 80 people attended a workshop titled “Empowering Migrants”, organised by Bhartiya Samaj Brisbane at Upper Mt Gravatt Progress Hall in Brisbane, Queensland in September 2023.

The aim of the workshop was to lay the foundation of a series of sessions providing new migrants with accurate information and knowledge as they start their settlement journey in Australia.

Bhartiya Samaj Brisbane’s president Abhishek Sharma said it was challenging for him to find the

correct information when he moved to Australia.

“The key purpose of the Empowering Migrants workshop is to provide accurate information with the help of a subject-matter experts and raise awareness about the way of life in Australia,” said Abhishek Sharma.

Bhartiya Samaj Brisbane supports bringing “Positive Change” into the lives of Australia’s diverse South Asian communities to empower them to become strong, confident and in control of their lives.

“We are dedicated to

enriching lives and increasing people’s choices and possibilities for realising their potential. Now the Brisbane chapter has been launched to continue delivering the core values of Bhartiya Samaj Charitabel Trust (Auckland) which embraces empowering people with knowledge, to build strong identities and to connect with diverse communities whilst excelling our service to the community in Brisbane, Queensland.”, said Abhishek Sharma.

Three key things that Bhartiya Samaj Brisbane chapter is focussing on over the next few months are:

- a. Helping migrants to settle in Brisbane by information dissemination
- b. Building more inclusive communities
- c. Collaborating with various other community organisations to conduct a joint venture/event.



Bhartiya Samaj Canterbury running high on culture & social cohesion



Bhartiya Samaj Canterbury Trust Incorporated's mission is to help people of Indian origin to strive and excel socially, culturally, economically, and professionally.

The areas of focus are:

- 1) Maintaining culture and heritage for future generations.
- 2) Building relationships between individuals, Indian and wider communities.
- 3) Promoting cultural awareness and cultural competencies.
- 4) Providing advocacy for settlement, support, and opportunities for engagement with New Zealand and Indian governments on the matters of importance.
- 5) Promoting social cohesion and

unity in diversity.

Bhartiya Samaj Canterbury (BSC) Incorporated's president Dr Surinder Tandon MNZM said BSC is grateful to the members of the Canterbury-wide Indian and other communities for their support to activities.

Dr Tandon said Bhartiya Samaj's Canterbury chapter, along with Canterbury Indian Women Group chair Archana Tandon ji were proud to be awarded Selwyn Gold Award for Art & Culture.

"We are absolutely thrilled to receive Gold Award in 'Arts and Culture' category in recognition of excellence and outstanding contribution to the arts and culture in Selwyn. Thanks to the community, Selwyn District Council and Mayor

Sam Broughton for continued support to foster social cohesion and celebrate cultural diversity," they said.

Bhartiya Samaj Canterbury Incorporated, along with Canterbury Indian Women Group successfully organised Selwyn Diwali 2022, International Yoga Day in association with the High Commission of India in Wellington, International Mother's Day, Karva Chauth Mela and Cross-Cultural Positive Parenting Workshop for Diverse Ethnic Communities.

The Canterbury chapter also co-hosted Hon'ble Minister of State, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India Dr Rajkumar Ranjan Singh ji, and the High Commissioner of India in New Zealand Her Excellency Mrs Neeta Bhushan ji in September 2023.



BSCT in Media

2023 has been a phenomenal year for Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust as it received accolades from regional, national and international media.

Be it supporting communities during Auckland Anniversary Floods, Cyclone Gabrielle or addressing seniors' and migrants' concerns, BSCT has always been at the forefront raising important voices and appreciating the support and engagement of communities. This makes Bhartiya Samaj one of the biggest charity organisations in New Zealand, and it is on its way to replicate the success in Australia.



RNZ News, Sport, Business, Health, Technology, Food, Entertainment, Music, Environment

Overcoming mental health stigma remains a challenge for Asian communities

By [Name]

Overcoming mental health stigma remains a challenge for Asian communities. A new study from the University of Auckland shows that Asian people are less likely to seek help for mental health issues compared to their European counterparts. The study found that cultural beliefs and a lack of awareness of mental health services are major barriers. Dr. Surinder Tandon, a leading expert in the field, says that mental health care providers need to be more culturally sensitive and offer services in multiple languages to better support Asian communities.

DR SURINDER TANDON
CHRISTCHURCH MULTICULTURAL COUNCIL PRESIDENT

CHRIS LYNCH
CHRISTCHURCH'S NEWSROOM

Victims of aggravated robberies call for tougher punishment

Christchurch | Crime
Dec 4 | Written By Chris Lynch



Christchurch dairy workers including victims of aggravated robberies in Redcliffs and Spreydon, protested today at Cathedral Square, demanding tougher laws to combat crime

Otago Daily Times

Dunedin 17 | 8 Saturday, 14 October 2023 Send us news & photos

News Sport Life & Style Entertainment Business Regions

Monday, 14 August 2023

Indians celebrate country's independence day

By Tracey Roxburgh

Regions > Queenstown



Celebrating Indian Independence Day at Lake Hayes yesterday are (from left) Bhartiya Samaj Queenstown Charitable Trust vice-president Poonam Sethi, treasurer Amit Sethi, and preside

Migrants in overcrowded Auckland house face eviction in the midst of INZ investigation

By Linda Tan

31 Aug 2023 05:31 PM 6 mins to read

Groups of between 20 to 40 are being crammed into two- and three-bedroom properties in Auckland's Blockhouse Bay, Lynfield, Manurewa, Glen Eden, Takanini and Hillsborough.

In a letter from Charlton Property Management, the men at the Manurewa house were told they were in breach of the Residential Tenancy Act and they were not allowed to stay there. The letter said no more than three people were allowed to live in the house.

The men invited the Herald into the property yesterday afternoon. In the living room, four mattresses were laid on the floor and shared by seven men.

They share a single shower and one stove, which was covered in grime. In the bedrooms, more mattresses were on the floor and suitcases were piled up against the walls. The stretch that came with having that many men crammed up in a small living space for months on end was obvious.



Jeet Suchdev (in grey) has been helping to distribute supplies to victims on behalf of the Indian High Commission. Photo / Alex Burton

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) has launched what it is calling an in-depth and comprehensive investigation into the alleged case of Indian and Bangladeshi nationals who arrived in New Zealand under the Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) scheme with the promise of employment that didn't eventuate.

Officers have spoken to 115 people who were living in overcrowded and unsanitary houses in six houses across Auckland suburbs.

One support worker, who wanted to remain anonymous, said at one of the properties, a coffee broke out after one of the men had been in the toilet for too long.

First they were placed into a three-bedroom house crammed with 24 men. Now, they have been told they have a week to leave the property because they were occupying it illegally.

The men are among a group of more than 100 migrants from Bangladesh, Pakistan and India who allegedly paid thousands of dollars for employment agreements with local recruitment agents but have received no work or since arriving.

"We are being evicted, but where do we go?" asked Parjinder Singh, 25.

"If we have to sleep in the streets, we will die in the cold."

Singh had paid about \$20,000 for his visa and the promise of a full-time job that paid \$30 an hour and would lead to permanent residency for him to support bringing the rest of his family here.

Immigration Minister Andrew Little ordered a review of the accredited employer scheme this month after "serious concerns" were raised by a whistleblower that proper checks were not being carried out.



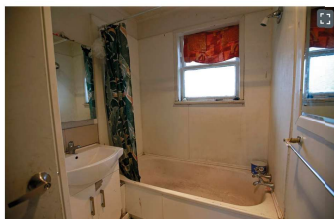
Living conditions are "unfit for humans", a support worker says. Photo / Alex Burton



Meats comprise many of potatoes and onions. Photo / Alex Burton

Singh said just five people were in the Manurewa house when he arrived three months ago, but "more and more just kept coming".

"Now we have to start the day at 4am and take turns to make sure we can get a chance to use the toilet or shower," he said.



The 24 men have been sharing a single shower and stove for three months. Photo / Alex Burton

Latest from Zealand

Was a station? England fall - ru Sereni

Boy's health batt but it's not impo

How the Indian community celebrates Matariki

9:03 pm on 12 July 2023

Blessen Tom (journalist) @blessen_tom @BlessenTomRNZ

Share this



A kapa haka performed by Waiura Kaha for the Indian community in Auckland. Photo: Supplied / Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust

Members of the Indian community across the country have attended Matariki festivities as New Zealand celebrates the Māori New Year.

Different community groups held meetings in Auckland with kapa haka performances and waiata to mark the occasion. Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust members celebrated with music, dance, and by learning teo.

"It was fabulous," trust founder Jeet Suchdev said.

"We've always wanted to integrate with the people of the land. We celebrate the Māori New Year every year."

Members of the trust were treated with a kapa haka performance by Waiura Kaha led by Kathleen Williams. There was also a small exhibition of Māori artefacts and a session on the importance of Matariki and Māori culture.

Suchdev believed Indian and Māori cultures had a lot of similarities.

"They give a lot of importance to family, they respect their elders and honour nature, and we do the same thing. We feel at home when we meet them, so much warmth."



Kiwi-Indians in South Island remember freedom fighters on Independence Day

MAHESH KUMAR IN CHRISTCHURCH

A diverse gathering of Indian community members assembled in Christchurch on August 15 to commemorate India's 77th Independence Day. Hosted by Indian grocery store Masa Foods, the ceremony kicked off at 7am with more than 50 people braving the cold, some dressed in the iconic Indian tricolour, reflecting their pride and connection to their homeland.

Masa Foods owner, Mahesh Sharma has hosted the only annual Independence Day celebration in Christchurch for the past seven years.

Sharma, along with Sandeep Khanna and team, ensured the attendees were treated to piping hot tea and snacks. At 7:30am, the Indian flag was hoisted against the crisp morning sky.

The ceremony was performed by President of Christchurch Multicultural Council Dr Sunder Tandon and Lt Col Sada Abbasi (Retd).

Speaking on occasion, Dr Tandon congratulated the attendees on the Indian Independence Day and said, "It is our duty to always remember the freedom fighters, many of whom gave their lives for our freedom. India got its freedom not only to govern the country by its people but also to freely celebrate and promote our diverse cultures, faiths, languages, and values."

In his brief speech, Lt Col Abbasi mentioned India's latest moon mission and said, "The upcoming moon landing is a testament to India's technological development. As a nation, India has come a long way."

The Indian community in New Zealand has also grown and is making a significant impact. We are thriving, and our contribution in all aspects of New Zealand life is commendable.

"We are a peace-loving and forward-thinking nation, and this is evident in our progress and the energetic performance by community members, including a kids fancy dress show, National MP for Southland Joseph Mooney attended the event, who in his brief speech, remembered the peaceful resistance that Mahatma Gandhi inspired during India's struggle for freedom."

Public Interest Journalism

If you want to live in a kind community, create one!

Photo: (From left to right) Mayor of Kaitiaki Coast, Janet Holburne, Founder and Chairperson of Bhartiya Samaj Charitable Trust, Iru Kaviraja, African performance artist Sani Mawurraji, President of Bhartiya Samaj Wellington-Manurewa Charitable Trust, Rishi Sharma, and SP Paul Eagle.

Most international students when they come to New Zealand spend their time in cafes, classrooms and get-togethers. It's hard, it is all extremely worthy, but I spend their time and resources doing random acts of kindness. Wellington Rishi Sharma is one of them.

Sharma would spend his days off volunteering with the community, groups, hospitals and charities. It is something he has been doing for over a decade, says his wife Dolly Sharma.

Even when he was a successful entrepreneur owning three Domino's stores in Wellington, it was hard for him to give up the community work. "He always looks up the opportunities in his community."

BHARTIYA SAMAJ CHARITABLE TRUST
TRUTH IS RESILIENT

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