



Practices Compendium Series Part 2:
**Case Studies of
Combating COVID-19 pandemic
in Aspirational Districts**



Transformation of Aspirational Districts Programme

April 2020

Why this learning compendium?

We share with gratitude the first in the “Practices Learning Compendium” series, a compilation of innovative practices and processes initiated by District Administration in India’s poorest districts to Combat COVID-19. Purpose of this Learning compendium is to disseminate efforts of the administration in the Aspirational Districts integrated by Ministry of Home Affairs for learning and application in other districts and contexts.

The stories have been written by Aspirational District Fellows placed in the districts. While we have made efforts to ensure that the work of the entire District team, led by the Collector, the Superintendent of Police, representatives of State and Central government and particularly the frontline health functionaries is presented accurately, there may be some inadvertent errors for which we sincerely apologise. Some stories have been written in first person account, however, in all cases it has been a solid teamwork. Our purpose to prepare this compendium was to collate and to disseminate experiences and ideas that are being implemented in real time as we rise together to defeat COVID-19. We may have erred in not giving credit to individuals or underlying numbers have become dated given the dynamic responses to the changing situation and fast response of the administration.

The team of researchers at VikasAnveshFoundation responded to our request of facilitating the write-shop at a short notice. All interactions with the writers of the case studies happened on emails and phone calls. Those conversations led to the compilation of the compendium after the VAF team edited the stories to ensure that cases come to you in a readable format.

We will look forward to your suggestions and feedback in making the next publication more useful to readers. We request our readers to share these inspiring stories with wider audience in and outside the country too!

Fellowship Support Team
Transformation of LWE-Aspirational Districts Programme

Editors' Note

The Context: The Aspirational Districts

The '**Transformation of Aspirational Districts**' Programme (<https://niti.gov.in/about-aspirational-districts-programme>) aims to expeditiously

improve the socio-economic status of 117 districts from across 28 states. The Aspirational Districts Programme is a product of collective effort in which States are the main drivers. At Government of India level, programme is anchored by NITI Aayog. In addition, individual Ministries have assumed responsibility to drive progress of districts. Ministry of Home Affairs is integrating the programme in 35 most backward districts. Ministry of Home Affairs and Tata Trusts have partnered to provide support to district administration. In each of these 35 districts, two Aspirational District Fellows have been placed. Transform Rural India Foundation (<https://www.trif.in/>) anchors the induction, training and placement of Fellows. Young and bright men and women, appointed as Fellows have tried to provide diligent assistance to the District Collectors/Deputy Commissioners of these districts in Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Maharashtra and Telengana.

While these districts have so far been spared from aggressive spread of the dreaded COVID-19 pandemic, they have none the less been taking a variety of steps to brace the adverse situation arising out of the pandemic. The governance challenge was particularly difficult in these districts. On one hand, limited awareness about the contagious coronavirus coupled with large presence of returning (or in-transit) migrants would expose the districts to serious health hazard. On the other hand, access to health infrastructure, from availability of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) to quarantine facility and ventilators, was limited. Arrangements had to be made within a short period of time and at a large scale. In absence of these, the population in general and the frontline health workers in particular would remain highly vulnerable to the ever-expanding pandemic. The challenge was not merely restricted to stopping the corona virus from spreading through tracing and treatment.

The Fellows themselves in these districts have documented the excellent work done by their respective District administrations. In this **compendium**, we have attempted to put together stories of dedication, thoughtful planning and alert and quick action taken by the Government offices under the leadership of the District Collectors/Deputy Commissioners.

Convergence with a single goal

The case studies presented in this compendium (Part 2) are ideal examples of convergence in action. A large number of development literature has emphasized the need for convergence in developmental efforts. There is no situation than a crisis situation like the one in this publication where one has witnessed complete convergence of all government and citizen efforts solely on identifying and treating affected patients and ensuring that the virus is contained and the larger community is protected. The Coronavirus pandemic is an extraordinary situation that has put tremendous pressure on all the line departments of the government, the law and order machinery and other development departments. Only a convergent and coordinated effort could possibly address the multiple challenges that this situation presents. In all the case studies we have ample illustrations to show how everyone is focused on one single goal- overcoming this crisis. As has been said in the ancient literature (the Rigveda).

समानीवः आकूतिः समानाहृदयानिवः ।

समानम् अस्तु वो मनः यथावः सुसहा असति ॥

Let our aim be one and single! Let our hearts be joined as one. United be our thoughts. At peace with all, may we be together in harmony.



Unified yet decentralized responses

The stories presented in this compendium are an interesting approach in responding to the emerging situation- what we have called as unified yet decentralized. While the country was preparing and is implementing a nationwide uniform strategy to contain the spread of the Coronavirus disease, the district administration in each place had the unique challenge of implementing this uniform strategy in their respective districts while at the same time being responsive to the peculiar context and the micro challenges that their geography presented. Each of the challenges was special. For instance, every district had to take care of migrants returning from distant locations and this needed a uniform response. However, certain districts benefited from presence of well-equipped infrastructure such as hospitals of large corporate houses located in their cities while other places, they continued to depend on the not so well developed infrastructure. This therefore presented unique opportunities to build on existing available physical and institutional infrastructure and yet remain consistent and cohesive in rolling out the overall planned national strategies in Delhi and the state capitals. This was unique case of a federal structure that has both a centralised and a decentralized strategies acting in tandem, and not at cross purposes.

Innovation, Improvisation, the *Jugaad* way of working at its best!

Often the Indian system of innovation and improvisation has been scoffed as *Jugaad*, something that compromises on quality and is less innovative and hence an undesirable feature of our research orientation. It is this unique Indian way of addressing complicated and unforeseen situations that one witnesses in the compendium of a studies.

We have an example of a liquor factory being taken over by the district administration and used for preparing sanitizers so badly needed in the present situation. We have another example of a factory, a government set up Apparel Park with a capacity of 200 sewing machines designed to stitch uniforms for school children, quickly being turned into a manufacturing unit for stitching 50,000 masks. In one particular case, in Khunti district, the SHGs producing lemon oil and *tulsi*, potential ingredients for sanitizers, were converged with the sanitizer producing SHGs. In another case, the district administration decided to involve the government teachers in tracing and tracking the returnee migrants who were kept under home quarantine. The idea emanated from the understanding that the teachers are respected in the society, generally their views would be considered seriously and people would be honest with them. Also because of their professional linkages, they had intricate presence even in the remotest of the areas. The result on their involvement was positive to the extent that even those who had violated the quarantine confessed earlier the teachers. This allowed the district administration – which would otherwise have been oblivious to such violations – to take corrective actions.

There are several such examples of improvisation, responding to emergency situations and given the resource crunch, thinking out of the box. The districts and their work portrayed in this compendium suggest how with limited resources, innovative ideas with a solution oriented approach have been put in use by the district administration.

Institutions of women at the forefront

In these extra ordinary situations, there are many districts where one sees exemplary work performed by institutions of women. We have a number of illustrations where the district administration and the institutions of the poor women have collaborated actively. For instance, many of the self-help groups of women and their Apex organisations promoted by Jharkhand rural livelihood promotion Jharkhand Rural Livelihood Promotion Society have come forward and contributed in providing immediate relief to people in distress. We have a case where 200 women have come into action to stitch masks needed for the health department. The *Didis* (sisters) in many districts at great personal risk are reaching out to fellow women and communities at large in remote villages. But for the presence of large number of such women volunteers present in each and every village, it would have become next to impossible to reach out to citizens. These women institutions championing the spirit of self-help have not only provided self-help to their own members but also self-help to the fellow community on a very large scale.

Technology that enables

Another common feature observed in reports from all the district is the use of Information Technology and modern communication methods to reach out to the last person. In many districts we have come across use of apps, social media platforms as also setting up of helpline and call centres. These latest technology applications creatively used by the district leadership have come handy for people in distress to reach out to the district officials. There are instances where call centres located in the aspirational districts received calls from stranded migrant labours across thousands of kilometres. What is also noteworthy is that the technology use is not just for generating data. The information that was received was quickly analysed and responded to in terms of mitigating the sufferings of people say for instance people who had used call centre numbers. Similarly the applications developed were used to systematically track communities who needed special care and attention.

Leaders leading from the front and the unsung heroes at the front line

The cases of various districts are reflections of how the district level administration have risen to the occasion in such times of crisis to mitigate the health and ensuing economic adversities that COVID-19 would otherwise inflict on the population in their respective districts. They have led from the front while hundreds of health workers, ASHA workers, teachers, and community extension workers, officials in villages and blocks, attendants at call centres, staff in remote locations all are contributing to the massive ongoing efforts of the district leadership.

Dynamic State-Citizens collaboration

There is a running thread in all the stories presented in this compendium. One witnesses a very dynamic and fruitful cooperation between the massive administrative machinery of the government on one hand and a large number of citizen organisations (also called as civil society or NGOs) on the other hand. This collaboration is an interesting amalgamation of government working with a sense of responsibility towards its citizens and equally intensive self-help and altruistic motivations of a large number of organisations. There are multiple examples of such collaboration across all districts. Be it running a community kitchen, police force reaching out to people stranded, dry rations being distributed to needy people or providing ambulance services for patients to reach hospitals. Each story has one or two examples of such collaborations happening on ground. We earnestly hope that such positive interactions continue beyond this time of crisis.

Miles to go

The Honourable Prime Minister in his address to the Nation on April 14 appealed to all citizens to continue to follow strict guidelines as the lock down has been extended. While this compendium (Part 2) has attempted to present glimpses of work that is happening across the country in aspirational districts, the country has a long way to go in terms of facing the threats posed by this pandemic and then be prepared for post-pandemic normalcy where all citizens can return to their lives and livelihoods completely disrupted by this crisis. There is thus a long way to travel and all the district officers and their staff as also different stakeholders have still some time before we can have some breathing space. Our effort was to present these heroic efforts to the citizens of this country so that our resolve gets further strengthened.

Editorial team

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VikasAnvesh Foundation, Pune, April 24, 2020

<http://www.vikasanvesh.in/>



Supporting Government's response to COVID-19 pandemic in LWE-Aspirational Districts; Aspirational District Programme Team's effort

The world is facing an unprecedented challenge with communities and economies everywhere affected by the growing COVID-19 pandemic and we the Transformation of Aspirational District (TADP) team has committed, dedicated and joined our hands with many stakeholders (i.e. Government, Development Partners, NGOs, CSOs, Industries, Philanthropic institutions, Farmers Producers Groups, doctors and Frontline Workers, Police Personnel, technocrats etc) at this critical juncture which required immediate action and collaboration from all corners of society and sectors.

The Tata Trusts and Ministry of Home Affairs collaboration in the Aspirational District programme for the LWE districts have created the opportunity for the team to support the Govt's efforts in responding to the pandemic. These LWE-Aspirational districts are the areas where people are not only experiencing civil strife situations but also the poorest form of service delivery be it health care, education, livelihoods etc. These areas are most prone to experience devastating socio-economic crises that will leave deep scars if the pandemic is not controlled properly. The Aspirational District Cells i.e State Resource cell and District resource cell embedded within the Government Administration are acting together to extend all possible support to the Government and thereby strengthening the Govt.'s effort.

While the State Resource Cell is working in close coordination with the line department at State level, the Aspirational District Fellows have immersed in the Districts response efforts. The supportive role of the team are on 7 key domains i.e a) Emergency Medical Response and safety of frontline workers, quarantine management b) Humanitarian support on relief and food distribution, c) Restoration and outreach of Social protection scheme benefits, d) Promoting localized production, distribution and livelihood augmentation measures, e) Resource mobilization and financing from CSOs, CSR and Philanthropy, f) Activating measures for legal help and reducing domestic violence issues and g) Advocating collaboration and partnership for fight against Covid.

The team is collaborating with individuals, Institutions, CSR, Corporates and trying to bring together expertise from *Government Departments (Home, Disaster Management, Health, Finance, Labor WCD etc.)* Public Health, Engineering, Technology, Sociology, Behavioral Science, Mental Health, Migration, Financing, Law & Order (Police), Humanitarian Emergencies, etc.to

- a) Prevent spreading of Virus and prevent new infections
- b) Early Diagnosis of COVID 19 Cases and treatment
- c) Facilitating better preparedness for COVID-19 Care and Treatment
- d) Mitigating the impact of the pandemic and protecting the Vulnerable Population
- e) Long term rehabilitation and recovery of the individuals and Families from Vulnerable Communities and LWE-Aspirational Districts to catch up national development parameters.

Using data and technology at its optimum level and keeping the key strategy (Collaboration and Convergence) in focus, we are partnering with agencies to bring learnings from different corner of the globe and propose the solutions to the districts for adaption.

Let the combined effort ensure that **No One Goes Hungry, Everyone is protected and their Dignity is respected!!!**

Programme Team

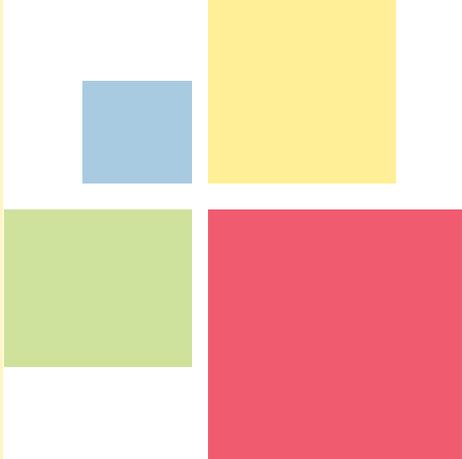
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Transformation of Aspirational Districts Programme

<https://www.aspirationaldistricts.in/>

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1. COMMUNITY AWARENESS & CONTAINMENT

1.1 Preparedness of a Covid-19 Before Its Outbreak- Activities and Learnings from East Singhbhum

- Mala Advani and Harsh Raj, East Singhbhum, Jharkhand

Ensnconced in the serene hills of Dalma and enriched by the mighty rivers Swarnarekha and Kharkai lies the district of East Singhbhum, literally meaning the “land of lions”. The lions are no more to be seen but the tradition and culture of this the district is as majestic as one. It is a potpourri of different cultures as this the district shares its borders with West Bengal as well as Odisha. East Singhbhum district which is situated at the extreme corner of the southeast Jharkhand, consists of 11 blocks and is home to 2.3 million people. This district’s natural and mineral feeds some of the biggest industries in India, like the TATA, HCL, UCIL etc. with raw materials. However, since a significant percentage of the population lives in the rural areas it is very important that the urban-rural divide is effectively managed during the times of pandemic, where core issues like food security, right information and awareness and discipline on lockdown measures are the most crucial issues. The district administration has taken several initiatives to address such issues in rural as well as urban areas in this direction.

Challenges as a District

As the district witnesses spread of COVID-19 pandemic across the country, it surmises that prevention is the key to preparedness for this disease. Positive COVID-19 cases started appearing in Jharkhand at the on-start of April and this was a harbinger for East Singhbhum district to advance its preparedness mechanisms. Dealing with the lockdown brought in numerous challenges like food security of various sections, incoming migrants, mapping travellers, etc.

Conventional yet contrasting

The common design to register and respond to public grievances has been creating a control room, which was done by our district. But the district headquarters being a cosmopolitan city in Jharkhand, expected overseas footprint has been very high. The main challenge for this control room and district administration has been identifying people with foreign and domestic travel, in addition to resolving public grievances. In this regard, the district sought for travellers’ history from airports (both Ranchi and Kolkata) and railways. Surveillance teams were then formed and these teams started visiting people with travel history to their houses. This step helped the administration multiply its database and travellers’ mapping. Surveillance teams came back with more names of people with domestic or overseas travel history. Soon, from hundreds, this database reached to having more than 14000 records. This consists of travellers, migrants, tourists and pilgrims. To improve surveillance efficiency, the number of such teams were doubled and more data came in.



Surveillance teams doing door-to-door campaign

The next big challenge was the gap between travellers' data and sample collection for testing. Somehow these two were having a huge difference just because the database was failing to flag important inferences. This is where the role of aspirational district fellow started. Assisting the administration in door-to-door surveillance, developing surveillance mechanisms, data analysis and handling, responsible data cleaning, following up with control room activities, etc. are being done by ADF. This led to an increase in sample collection. Also, a follow-up mechanism has been created to telephonically contact an average of 1000 people on a daily basis to understand their current health status. The control room consists of approximately 30 people, having a fixed 8-hour duty timing, for activities like data entry, calling people with travel history, registering and complying to general complaints and providing potential leads to medical surveillance unit to follow-up. This control room will be functional until the pandemic exists.

Addressing issues relating to sustenance

Ensuring food security for all and awareness among vulnerable communities have been major broad objectives of district administration in terms of securing people's well-being. For food security, more than 120 locations are identified and cooked food is being supplied to these locations through government schemes and civil society organisations. Apart from that, supplying of dry ration to those who don't have a ration card and are eligible, is being supplied through coordinating and tagging various civil society organisations, so that no section of public remains unattended for food security. Community kitchens have been initiated in rural areas to ensure supply of cooked food in these areas. Home delivery services through various channels have been created to cater needs of the urban areas.

Interventions on Supply of Protective Gear

In this buffer time focussed on preparedness and awareness, the demand for protective gear grew manifold. Production and supply of protective gear increased in urban areas, but the administration's concern has been that the possible demand and supply gap might lead to black marketing of these items. Therefore, to address this problem for both urban and rural population, some innovative collaborations have happened in the district in terms of production of protective gear and some of it is being distributed free of cost to citizens. Triple layers' masks are produced by prisoners of Central Jail Ghaghidih, Jamshedpur. This jail is having a sewing machine unit which is now being used to manufacture face masks. This unit consists of 18 skilled people, a well-equipped and sanitized unit area. Since the start of face mask production, they have produced more than 26000 face masks which they have sold to government, NGOs and also have a retail counter for their product. They call it an effort to make a 'home-made' face mask.



Prisoners Sewing face masks

Some disinfectant chambers have been produced and installed with locally sourced raw materials. It is targeted to be installed in some prominent city markets. Currently, two such chambers have been installed: one in Mahatma Gandhi Memorial (MGM) Medical College and another in Vegetable market, Sakchi.

Sanitizers also have been locally produced by district administration. More 8000 litres. of sanitizer has been produced and distributed in the district. This has been distributed in the urban areas for a nominal cost and also being provided free of cost in PDS shops in rural areas.



Disinfection cabin at vegetable market, Sakchi Bazaar

Synergizing with Civil Society Action

The civil society of the district has been successful in helping the district in some of its core challenges like distribution of cooked food and dry ration in urban slums and vulnerable rural pockets, promoting home-based livelihoods in rural areas, creating prevention-related awareness about the virus. The district has also created a platform for coaction of Civil Society organizations (CSOs), so that a dedicated rural level volunteer partnership can be created and the administration's efforts can be effectively channelized.

Ready for COVID-19?

Currently, the administration is observing a buffer time before it gets its first COVID-19 positive case. The district's major focus is to still track down the potential spreaders. Therefore, self-reporting has been requested to the general public at large. Preparedness on containment is the biggest priority. Training of identified personnel for survey in containment zone, mock drills on containment survey, digitised survey forms, protective gear for survey team, medical infrastructure for cases from containment, etc. all of this has been prepared. This time is being utilized for advance preparedness and learning from experiences of other states and districts.



1.2 Convergence Among Stakeholders for Efficient Utilization of Resources in Khunti

- Nikhil Tripathi, Khunti, Jharkhand

A series of video conferences related to the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) had just taken place. The efforts under the ADP in the past two years were appreciated by CEO NITI and Chief Secretary Jharkhand. But a new crisis was already knocking at the door. At the end of the video conferences the District Collector Khunti asked the officials to start reducing the number of staff called for daily work, to start social distancing and to undertake various other preventive measures. The district was just starting to realize the magnitude of the problem from Covid-19.

Plethora of challenges

The district of Khunti faced a plethora of challenges. Covid-19 had brought in a crisis where lives of people were at stake and where their employment opportunities had been curtailed if not completely abandoned. The ignorance and lack of information was fuelling rumours and fear. The district administration had to address the challenges with all its might. The District collector called for an emergency meeting of its officials to discuss a strategy for containment of the disease and understand our present status of preparedness. It was quickly realized that the district was running short of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)s – masks and sanitizers, thus risking the health of the frontline workers. Also, one had to arrange for ventilators, fogging machines and hospital beds where symptomatic and asymptomatic cases would be quarantined. The population in the district depended a lot on the so-called haats and the dependence on daily wage work for eking livelihood was quite high.

To address the twin challenges of health and economy the district administration had to ensure that their functionaries reach the remotest of district, arrange for financial support to meet the health infrastructure requirement, and most importantly had to ensure that the daily food supply was taken care of to ensure that no body suffered from hunger.

A strategy takes form – bring financial and institutional convergence

The district administration came up with a strategy where it would put its best efforts towards bringing convergence among the available agencies, organizations and resources available within the district. Under the leadership of the District Collector, The Aspirational District Fellow with his network and expertise was to bring people and resources together so that all would be working in one direction with a single goal. With all these resources at its disposal the district administration would then be able to reach every individual in the district who would be in dire need of help.

Self Help Groups manufacture sanitizers and masks

The first challenge was to ensure that enough masks and sanitizers were made available in the district. For this the district decided to take help from the existing community institutions. Khunti has a large number of self-help groups and federations. Some of these institutions were already working in small scale businesses like lemon-grass oil, tulsi oil and tamarind processing. The ADF has been involved in setting-up of these Lemon grass and Tulsi oil processing units. Lemon oil and Tulsi are widely known for their medical benefits. Blending of these oils with hand sanitizer having 72 percent alcohol was recommended by the laboratory after ideation from the district team. On 25th March the responsibility to supply these sanitizers, blended with lemon-grass oil and Tulsi oil was given to Anigraha Gramin wWSeva Kendra. Since then a group of 8 SHG women have made 280 liters of sanitizers till now and now have targeted to supply another 1000 litres. In two weeks, around 10,000 masks

have been made by SHGs in Torpa, Khunti and Arki block of the district. These masks and sanitizers are now being used by the frontline workers including health officials, other officials, police staff and other individuals.



Masks made with SHG women in Aspirational District Khunti



Lemon Grass based Sanitizer in Aspirational District Khunti

Civil society initiatives

The district has an active presence of civil society organizations (CSOs). On 25th March, the District Collector called for a meeting of the volunteers from the CSOs working in the district. The idea was to gather support from the members of civil societies in running the COVID-19 control room, support in terms of food, logistics support, information and communication for the community. A total of 35 volunteers attended the meeting to design a targeted plan of action with assigned roles to each member. The district control room would function like a call centre, where queries of people would be recorded and addressed by connecting to various departments responsible.

As an outcome of this meeting, five civil society organizations decided to provide four staff from their organisations for regular monitoring in the District COVID-19 control room. Also civil society organisations such as CINI-Tata Trusts, NBJK, Plan India, Sewa Welfare Society and Pradan have extended their support by providing a list of ready volunteers. These volunteers would act as an extended arm of the administration to help the latter in implementing our containment strategy by door to door awareness campaigns in case of an outbreak in the district.

In lock down, people got stranded in remotest of the rural areas. While the distribution drive of food supplies was going on with our CSO partner Sewa Welfare Society, a woman came up asking for a packet of rice. It would have been difficult for anyone from outside to reach this village. On being asked about her situation the lady broke into tears and didn't speak a word. The district volunteer handed over a packet of 5 kg rice to her and she left.

Given the looming food crisis, the district administration had to ensure food supply to the poor. It decided to take the help of civil society organizations. An organization, Help a Child in Need, had approached the district administration some three months back to work in education. As a pilot, the organization was asked to work in the remotest Jaipur panchayat of the Rania block. To contribute in the fight against COVID pandemic, the organization agreed to provide 10 Kg rice, 3 Kg dal and 3 Kg sattu per family in Jaipur Panchayat. Other CSOs have also started playing an active role to reach the remotest of the places in the district with their network of volunteers and resources. A Khunti based NGO, Sewa Welfare Society along with Pradan has distributed 50 quintals of rice in the district. Another NGO, Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra (NBJK) has provided food supplies for 300 families and has provided training in 41 revenue villages on awareness on social distancing and safe hygiene practices as per the guidelines provided by WHO. CINI-Tata Trusts has supported communication efforts through its messages in local dialects. Transforming Rural India Foundation (TRIF) with support of Tata Trusts

has also provided a kit with 300 PPEs and other equipment to the district. These numerous support systems in convergence have ensured us to be at a better position in our fight against Coronavirus Pandemic.

Corporation and CSR also contributes

The district administration has also made efforts towards convergence of support from Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and NGOs outside the district. Numerous requests were sent for assistance to get Ventilators, Masks, Sanitizers, Fogging machines and food supplies. As a result of the efforts, the administration has received 120 quintals of rice from Indian Oil Corporation Limited, one lakh packets of biscuits from Parle biscuits and financial assistance of Rupees 50 Lakhs from Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd. (PGCIL). The Tata Trusts and District Administration Khunti have partnered to construct a solar micro cold storage to be used to store vegetables during the pandemic.

The District Administration is trying to equip itself with the best of health infrastructure to contain the spread of disease in case of an outbreak. In light of the same, it has been reaching out to organizations like ONGC, GAIL, HPCL and BPCL to extend their support to the district. The overall effort has been to use a convergence strategy to equip the district with enough medicine supplies, protective equipment, ventilators and food supplies to handle even the most critical situations.



1.3 Rajnandgaon Fights the Battle against COVID-19

- Jyoti Singh, Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh

Since the announcement by the government of Chhattisgarh of statewide lockdown till 31st March, 2020 the district administration of Rajnandgaon has sprang into action to limit the spread of COVID – 19 in the district. The manner in which the entire COVID situation has been handled since the detection of one case in Rajnandgaon is indeed commendable. The district administration has been quite effective in the containment of the spread so far. With Section 144 imposed in the district, the administration has been able to implement the rule on social distancing so far. The overall success of containment and addressing the COVID situation is an outcome of the efforts of many unknown and selfless workers.

Striking a balance between protection, restrictions and provision

In the fight against Covid-19 the district administration has been striking a balance between imposing restrictions in movement, in tracing and treating and in providing numerous support provisions in terms of food and shelter to the needy.

A very detailed door to door survey was conducted by various front-line workers in all towns and villages of Rajnandgaon to trace the people with travel history and those who displayed symptoms. A total of 190 tests were done and 17 people who displayed symptoms were put in quarantine centers. Till now there has been one Covid-19 positive case in the district. Since then the administration has slogged hard to stop the spread and has been able to restrict the number of COVID Positive cases in the district.

The credit primarily goes to the doctors, nurses and other frontline health workers and lab experts who are involved in screening people and attending patients. They have been working relentlessly with an agenda of early protection, early identification, early diagnosis and early isolation. They have been ably supported by the police administration who are working tirelessly to ensure that the restriction measures are ruthlessly implemented. The sanitation workers are intensively working to ensure hygiene and cleanliness and all the frontline staff like the Mitanins and the Anganwadi workers are ensuring steady supply of rations to people.

In order to reduce inconvenience caused amongst the people due to the lockdown, the district administration strived to ensure availability of rations to the general public and also to the BPL and APL card holders. The administration also decided to universalise the Public Distribution System for one month to ensure no one suffers from food insecurity.

Helpline for stranded migrants and relief camps for migrants stranded in Rajnandgaon

The district administration has established a Helpline number to track the workers native to Rajnandgaon who have been stranded in other states amidst lockdown and necessary help was immediately provided to them. Till date a total of 8000 workers from the district have been found to be stranded in other districts. A major percentage of these workers are stranded in states of Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. A team of six members, consisting of the Aspirational District Fellow and Officials from the labour department and Zila Panchayat, has been formed to continuously follow up on the calls being received from the labourers on the helpline numbers.

At the end of every day a list of these workers is sent to the respective district administration where these labourers are stranded, along with their location and the issues they are currently facing with respect to access to essentials like food and shelter. These migrant workers are once again contacted to ensure that they have received the required help from the destination administration. Many workers who have been stranded in places like Hyderabad, Indore and Bangalore were contacted have received food and groceries within 24-hours of sending the letters to their respective district administrations.

A total of 48 Relief camps have been set up by the labor and tribal department across the district to accommodate and provide food and other essential items to workers from other states like MP, Maharashtra and Telangana who have been stranded in the district. As on date some 48 relief camps are operational in the district and some 921 stranded migrant workers are provided accommodation and food in these camps.

Clearly define responsibilities of functionaries

One of the major components of the micro plan that was developed to combat COVID-19 in the district was to clearly define the responsibilities of various functionaries.

The Asha, ANM and Anganwadi workers

At field level the ASHA workers, ANMs and the Anganwadi workers are playing a pivotal role in identification and reporting of clinically suspected cases. This group of frontline workers are also creating awareness among the community about disease prevention, need for home quarantine, common signs and symptoms and the need for reporting suspect cases. This awareness generation activity is undertaken by distributing fliers, pamphlets and also by interpersonal communication. Additionally, the NSS/NCC volunteers available in the district were also engaged in proper briefing on roles and responsibilities and infection, prevention and control practices. The Anganwadi workers are the real unsung heroes in this combat against Covid-19. They have ensured timely delivery of the Take Home Ration across the district. They are also providing hot cooked meals to children and mothers to avoid disruption of feeding under the nutrition programme.

SHG groups taking lead in the production of PPE and multiple development services

In the face of this extraordinary challenge from the COVID-19 pandemic, the self-help groups of the NRLM in the district have risen to the occasion. The district had a shortfall in the Personal protection Equipment like mask and sanitizers. In order to address the shortfall, the district administration has involved the SHGs in localized manufacture of masks and sanitizers. A total of 109 SHGs have been involved in the production of masks. Till date a total of some 1,20,000 masks have been produced and distributed. The district's municipal department has been involved in the distribution of these masks through channels like the medical and grocery stores. The masks which have been priced at Rs. 12 ensures a profit margin of Rs 5 which goes to the SHG members. Production of masks has proved to be a good source of revenue generation for the members of these SHGs in this time of crisis.

The SHGs are also running community kitchens, fighting misinformation and even providing banking and financial solutions to far-flung communities. These women – many of whom escaped poverty through the SHG route and hence know what it is like to be destitute and poor – are living up to their motto of self-help and solidarity. The SHGs being closest to the ground has been helping the district administrations to identify pockets of hunger and starvation such that efforts can be made to ameliorate them. With huge numbers of informal workers losing their livelihoods during the lockdown and food supply chains getting disrupted in some areas of the district, the community kitchens are playing an important role in providing food for the hungry.

Since access to finance is critical for people to sustain themselves during the lockdown, SHGs women who also work as banking correspondents are trying to provide banking and financial solutions to the far-flung communities. Deemed as an essential service, these bank sakhis are providing doorstep banking services in every nook and corner of the district, in addition to distributing pensions and enabling the needy to access credits into their accounts. About 50% of the Bank Sakhis customers are women. The SHG federation consisting of 50 bank Sakhis have taken ICT based banking services to over 10000 households across the districts.

Past few weeks of Lockdown and battling the Pandemic has given an altogether different perspective of dealing with a crisis situation. It is not just ruthless containment that is working, but a fine balance between protection measures (like curfew, containment, tracing treatment) and supportive measures (like provision of multiple

supportive services like universal PDS, community kitchen by SHGs, decentralised production of PPEs (which also creates an option for income generation), relief camps and helpline), has emerged as the twin pillars of the district's approach to combat the spread and the adverse effect emanating from the Covid-19 pandemic.



Mitanins distributing Take Home Rations



SHG workers making Ready To Eat Materials



Camps arranged at CHC for OPD



Sanitization being done at CHCs



Mask production being carried out by SHGs





2. Relief & Humanitarian

2.1 Home Delivering Vegetable Through E-Rickshaws in Kanker

- Neha Singh and Ankit Pingle, Kanker, Chhattisgarh

Kanker district is situated in the southern portion of Chhattisgarh and extends over an area of 7,161 sq. km, which is 5.3% of the total state area. The district is a part of Bastar division. It is surrounded by Rajnandgaon and Balod in the north, Dhamtari in the east, Kondagaon in the south-east and Narayanpur in the south. It lies between two well-developed cities of Chhattisgarh, namely Raipur and Jagdalpur. Small hilly pockets are found throughout the area interspersed with 5 main rivers -Doodh river, Mahanadi, Hatkul river, Sindur river and Turu river. Forests account for around 47.56% of the total geographical area of the district. As per Census 2011, Kanker has a total population of 7, 48,941 of which 89.8% of the people reside in the rural areas. People in the area are largely dependent on agriculture and forest produce for their livelihood.

Why was home delivery of vegetables required?

Even during COVID lockdown, people had to go to the market to purchase items of daily necessity. While this was important, there was a risk involved in going out due to the chance of exposure. Moreover, going out when there was no public transport available would be difficult for the elderly, single mothers and others, who had no helping hands. Considering this, there was an imperative need to find out a solution that would reduce the exposure of people as well as help those in need. Home delivery of vegetables was the perfect solution, since that would reduce the exposure, and unlike groceries, vegetables perish shortly, which would otherwise need people to regularly get out to purchase every few days. For this purpose, the plan was devised to take orders for vegetables on call, and the order would be delivered to the designated address the next day for Kanker City only.

Searching and finalisation of volunteers

The search for the volunteers was a challenge, since people were afraid of going out, and they would meet a lot of people regularly during home deliveries. In addition, existing vendors would not be a good choice since the administration cannot give preference to one vendor. Under such conditions, the plan was to bring in SHGs/ Members from SHGs who can do this. Finally, one active SHG member – Hemlata, was chosen who was willing to do this with her family, and since she already had an E-rickshaw, it would be easy for her to do home deliveries.

Procurement process of vegetables

The family had a backyard garden, and they grew vegetables at home. Apart from that, they were suggested to collect vegetables from their neighbors and others from the village, so that the people could benefit from this initiative as well. For vegetables that were unavailable in the village, the plan was to purchase it from the mandi/ wholesale market according to the demands and orders placed and then deliver it appropriately.

Price Finalisation

The price was kept the same as the market price, and was updated on a daily basis as per the market. The price was informed in advance while taking orders, and the amount was collected in cash the next day while delivering orders.

Finalisation of storage space

A proper storage space near the mandi was necessary for the family to have smooth operations. They were instructed by the district administration to collect vegetables from the village, assess the orders, buy the remaining from mandi, and come to the designated place. They then would proceed to pack the orders and deliver according to the route decided. A shop was facilitated by the district administration near mandi, which became the center of operations.

SOP : taking calls, record maintenance, packaging and home delivery

The family was appraised on how to take orders on calls, maintaining books for finance which included daily purchase and sale, keeping separate diaries for orders and deliveries, and segregating the orders area wise, so that they can plan their delivery route daily. The orders were packed after reaching the designated shop, and deliveries would be done via E-rickshaw, and orders were taken by other family members during the day. A specific timing of 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM was specified for receiving the orders.

Taking necessary permissions and passes from the district administration

The family members were given individual passes to move across the city amidst the lock down. They were also given a pass for the E-Rickshaw, so that the checkpoints would let them pass without any issues. It was specially mentioned that this vehicle would be used by the family exclusively for the purpose of home deliveries, in order to prevent any misuse of the permission granted.

Ensuring safety precautions being followed during vegetable distribution

The family was instructed to follow all the safety precautions while collecting, packaging and delivering the orders. In the designated shop, water and hand wash was kept to ensure they were washing their hands frequently. The orders were packed while maintaining appropriate distance among the members, and wearing masks to cover mouth and nose. While delivering, instructions to maintain two-meter distance from the E-Rickshaw and each other were pasted on the Rickshaw in Hindi. They carried hand sanitizer and gloves while delivering orders.

Advertisement

The pilot was initiated by posting the numbers in the administrative groups initially to see the response and number of orders. Later on, a pamphlet was designed by the fellows and was posted again on various platforms. A news piece was also given in the local newspaper, which also boosted the visibility of the initiative.



Advertisement designed
by Fellows

Implementation of the idea and challenges faced.

The initiative was kicked off as pilot on 30th March, 2020. For a few days the orders were received, and the initiative went well. However later, the family started selling vegetables other than received orders, which exposed them to more people. They had a bad experience with a lady who was kept in home isolation, and they got very scared of the experience. In addition, most of the villages in Kanker district have closed off their boundaries, and are not allowing movement. They were also afraid that the villages and the Sarpanch would question their decision to sell vegetables in such a manner.

The other issue was the dynamic price of the vegetables. Since the market was open for a limited time, the price of vegetables would drop substantially by evening, and even by afternoon. The price fluctuated too much to bring them any profit. Eventually they got a notice from their Sarpanch and had to stop the deliveries.



Vegetables being delivered while ensuring safety precautions



2.2 Fight with Covid-19: Relief to People in Distress in Jamui

- Meenakshi Basnal and Mohd. Sameer, Jamui, Bihar

Unorganized Sector and the Covid-19

March 24, 2020 will be marked in the annals of history as the day when the entire nation came to a standstill, owing to the lockdown announced by our Hon'ble Prime Minister. The lockdown has disproportionately more adverse impact on the people in the informal sector who are either on contract/ casual wage or on daily wages. In 2018, only 50% of the Indian population participated in the labor force, out of which 86% were employed in the informal sector, also known as the unorganized sector or the shadow economy. This figure is even higher for Bihar, standing at 92%. Jamui, in south Bihar, is one of the most backward districts of the country. The district is annually hit by drought which worsens the condition of people. The employment opportunity in the organized sector in the district is minimal. Thus, most of the workforce is employed on casual, contract or daily wages. With limited opportunities, the workers migrate to different states in search of employment. The district features in the bottom in most of the socio-economic indicators. To improve the condition of the district, the government of India has included it in the Aspirational District Programme introduced in 2017.

The unorganized sector is the hardest hit due to the sudden announcement of lockdown. This robbed daily wage earners of their income and left them stranded within and outside the district. Those who had migrated for better opportunities to other states were left with no option but to return. Inter-State transport, railways etc. all were suspended which left many people stranded from Bihar and UP at Anand Vihar terminal in New Delhi on 24th March. The decision by the Delhi government to repatriate these labourers led to the sudden inflow of migrant labour in Bihar in general and Jamui in particular. Approximately 8000 people have arrived in Jamui since 22nd of March. With no means to sustain their livelihood, they are totally dependent on the district administration.

Prompt Response of District Administration, Jamui

To reduce the plight of these workers, Jamui district administration reached out to the marginalized sections of the society without delay. Distribution of ration-kits was started by the district administration by identifying the worst hit people such as rickshaw pullers, families residing in temporary shelters on the outskirts, differently abled, elderly etc. A wave of calls followed to the District Magistrate (DM), Superintendent of Police (SP), Deputy Development Commissioner (DDC), Sub divisional Officer (SDO), Block Development Officer (BDOs) and other officers as the lockdown was announced. A 24x7 call center was established and staffed by 6 people per shift along with a nodal officer. Calls were registered under two heads: *Aapda* (disaster) and *Aapurti* (supply) related issues. *Aapdawas* to record calls from people who shared information about the inflow of migrant workers in their village, non-resident laborer's of Jamui stranded elsewhere and a few on availability of masks and sanitizers. *Aapurti* recorded issues related to people in distress who enquired about ration distribution or sought help to feed themselves and their families. An average of 20 calls a day were recorded under *Aapurti* who sought relief in the form of ration, cooked meal etc. Immediate action was taken by directing the complaint to the concerned officer. A follow up of the complaint was recorded on a daily basis until resolved and a report was presented. This helped feed all those families who were struggling.

As the time passed and people became more aware of the help that was being provided by district administration, people also stated directly calling DM, SP and DDC, who were available 24*7 to listen to their concerns. *Prabha Devi*, a 70-year-old widow residing in *Khairma* village of Jamui was left with no food as her son lost any scope of work. Her story caught DMs eye through social media platforms and the next thing that happened was that DM and SP were at her door with food supplies. The DM stated that *"no person will be allowed to sleep hungry"* and that *"such people reach out to the administration or give information of people who have been left stranded."* Rapid response of the administration helped cater to all the calls that were received personally or at the call center and relief was sent to them in the form of ration supplies.



District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police at Prabha Devi's house

Benevolent Role by Police Department, Jamui

Police department has always been picturized as not being people friendly and accused of lacking compassion. But during these tough times, they came forward to help the poor and ensured that no one goes to bed empty stomach. They made sure that the food kit gets distributed to the poor residing at any nook and corner of the district. The most backward blocks and villages of Jamui were covered by them. The police department targeted villages and communities that were backward which included mostly tribal and scheduled castes who are dependent on Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) and other daily wage activities. *"I make sure I deliver service demanded by all the people who call me, or I receive information about"* - Superintendent of Police (SP), Jamui. The Police Department of Jamui has covered 5,500 families for relief and is still counting. For this purpose, they have tried their best and have crowdfunded to help poor people overcome this crisis.

Health sector is already clouded with many challenges from infrastructure to HR. Being a doctor himself, he (SP) understands how Covid-19 has sabotaged all other health services. SP has made two of his vehicles available as ambulances during these tough times for delivery of other health services (emergencies, child deliveries etc.) Act of kindness by the police department has further strengthened belief in humanity and given us the confidence that together we will be able to overcome this crisis. The human race has survived World Wars and gone through the darkest of times, emerging victorious every time. This one would be no exception as well.



Ration kit distributed by Jamui Police

Role of Self-Help Group Federations and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

“Bhaiyajbhallahuwaki kl saisb market band hojaiegatb hum appnibetikajewer sonar Keyahan 6000 mairakh Kai hum bhighrmaisamanlakaiebharliya.” (When she heard the news of the lockdown, she went to a jewellery shop and gave the jewellery belonging to her daughter. The jeweller gave her Rs 6000 for it) - *Reshma Praveen*, a woman residing in a village narrated her story. When asked about the rate of interest she responded promptly: *“bhaiya 100 rupees mai 3 takka hr mhinejaydalega”* (She will have to give an interest rate of 3 per cent per month i.e, 36% per annum).

In order to reduce such plight of the families, Bihar Rural Livelihood Promotion Society (BRLPS) has announced interest free loans to women of Self-Help Group (SHG) for three months to aid them during these distressed times for purchase of essential commodities. This covers a total of 16,000 SHGs in Jamui covering 1,92,000 households. A Food Security Fund of INR 1,00,00 has been granted to 551 Village Organization (VOs) (federation of all SHGs in a village) to further fill the gap. This has helped VOs cover poor families of the village by providing them food security. Additionally, INR 2,000 have been given cash of 805 women beneficiaries who belong to extremely poor families who may or may not be part of any SHG under *Satat Jeevikoparjan Yojana*.



2,000 cash have been given of 806 women beneficiaries who belong to extremely poor families

Efforts of civil society organizations in Jamui deserve a mention as well. Their close association with communities has helped in identification of people from the communities who are most needy. They have raised funds and sought support from CSR for distributing relief material. A total of 1,800 kits have been distributed in three blocks by the organizations with the help of their funding organizations. They are constantly making efforts to reach out to more and more people.

Tough Road Ahead

Jamui district administration has left no stone unturned in minimizing the impact of Covid-19 specially to the most vulnerable sections of the society. It has reached out to people within and outside the district to provide relief to them. It has tried to identify “most-in-need” people by prioritizing households that will be left out by other relief funds or rations given to Priority Household (PHH) cardholders. Immediate relief has been provided to all who have reached out. The administration is also serving cooked food for people who have been left stranded in Jamui while travelling back to their homes. The battle against Corona is going to be a long one even when the lockdown is over. The task of the administration will be humongous to counter the impact of Covid-19. They would need to ensure that there is meaningful work for every hand, food for every mouth, spark in every eye and joy in every soul. An economic standstill has cost millions of workers to lose their job and now the govt. and the policymakers have to be creative to prevent the situation from getting out of hand. It should be kept in mind that even though Covid-19 infection is a health hazard, the lockdown it entails has economic repercussions.



2.3 Reaching the Unreached in Bhadradri Kothagudem

- Chitta Venkata Siva Prasad, Bhadradri Kothagudem, Telangana

Guthikoyas also known as MuriaGonds live in interior habitations of Bhadradri Kothagudem. This community has a long history of migration from Chhattisgarh because of the unrest created by SalwaJudum operation and in the search of livelihood. The community lives in very interior and remote habitations of the district and depend heavily on daily wage labour. As this community has migrated from another state, many people are yet to be issued ration cards. The district of Bhadradri Kothagudem has close to 25000 people belonging to this community out of which close to 60% of the people do not have access to ration cards.

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, all the daily wage livelihood options saw an immediate shutdown. This community relying heavily on daily wages got hit the most. The stock of ration available in their houses was running out and there was no source of income to buy new ration. Due to the lockdown, it became even more difficult to buy vegetables and other essential commodities. Immediate help in terms of ration was needed to avoid one of our worst fears - starvation death. District administration decided to provide dry rations i.e. Daal and rice to these communities along with the free ration promised by the state government to help them cope with this pandemic. We also distributed vegetables wherever there was a possibility to do so.

We started the exercise of listing each individual from these communities who did not have a ration card. We took the help of interior habitation community health workers (trained by the medical department of the district) to identify such people and estimated the quantities that we would be requiring to fulfil their needs. Once the need was identified (14,000 Kgs of rice & 1000 Kgs of Daal), we started approaching the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) agencies such as Akshyapatra foundation, to check if they can support the district with such a huge need. We also approached many Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to facilitate the same. A group of CSOs including Rural hope foundation, Robin Hood Army and Indigenous Development Organisation from Hyderabad played a major role in identifying the potential donors. With the help of these CSOs, we collected multiple individual donations, which were enough to buy the ration.



After arranging for enough donations, we got in touch with multiple dealers in the district who could provide a good price for the rations we had to procure. Only Local dealers were to be approached as procuring the ration from within the district became the need of the hour due to the lockdown. We took the guidance of the District Collector, Assistant collector and Tehsildars to finalise the procurement. Next we arranged for vehicles which would do all of our deliveries and identified a local resource person from the community who knew about the whereabouts of all these locations. After all this, we ensured that we have all the required permissions from the police department to travel to these areas, as many of these areas lie in the extremely sensitive zones of the district.



We finally distributed 13,960 Kgs of Rice and 1006 Kgs of Daal and reached out to 2326 beneficiaries in a weeks' time. This ration distributed is free of any costs. Planning and mapping of resources for the rest of the habitations is under process. We took a lot of help and guidance from the District Collector, Assistant Collector, Police department, Tehsildars of the mandals, Revenue staff of the mandals, interior habitation community health workers, Individual donors and CSOs to achieve this humongous task.



3. Coordination Support for Health Services

3.1 Gaya Braces to Face Covid Challenge

- Nidhi Punetha and Charu Madan, Gaya, Bihar

Gaya is the second largest city in the state of Bihar. Being among the holy pilgrim centres it attracts a large number of visitors making it vulnerable to the ongoing pandemic situation in the country. The district administration has been attentive and taking all measures in view of a large number of tourists and migrants. The situation has aggravated after the detection of five COVID-19 positive cases in the district. A 24*7 helpline has been launched to assist all the needy. Helpline numbers are made available to the public to seek any help related to corona. These helpline managers are also responsible for convergence between departments by transferring the complaints to the respective departments. To ensure the safety of the residents and the migrants, registration centres have been opened in all the 24 blocks of the district. While registering the details of the migrants, whether they have ration cards is verified. Information about people without ration cards is directed to the call centres and the collected data is shared with the respective block offices in the district. Through the helpline facility, a fast-track method has also been adopted to create required documents for the people who had applied previously. This fast-track service includes identification cards of migrant worker/BPL card holders who applied for important or urgent documents. Keeping in view of the distressed situation among the rural poor and labourers outside Gaya, District Administration is providing handholding support in the form of noting their queries down and conveying the concerned districts. The task force is responding by calling the district helpline number and keeping the communication intact. Under the Chief minister's pioneering scheme of providing 1000 rupees to the migrants stranded outside Bihar, around 10,000 people of Gaya have applied with the help of "Bihar Corona Tatkai Sahayta" mobile application.



Ensuring home quarantine being practiced properly

The facility of quarantine has been established at three levels: District, Block and Panchayat. Each facility has been assigned to a Nodal officer, ANM and ASHA to provide facilities to all people. The bed strength of the district is around 5500 out of which 2797 are currently occupied. The district administration received a list of 14,571 migrants entering through borders, out of which 10,890 were home quarantined and 2797 were shifted to quarantine centres. Migrant workers who registered themselves with the government are readily admitted to the quarantine homes. There are 332 active centres in the district. These workers are kept under observation for 14 days and if there are no symptoms for COVID-19, they are transported to their homes. If they show positive symptoms for the virus, they are transferred to the isolation centres. District has established four isolation centres with a 247-bed capacity spread over the district. Two such isolation centres are located in the sub-divisions named Sherghati and Tekari with a total 80 bed strength. The others are ANMCH with a total 130 bed strength, Mahkar additional primary health centre in Khezarsai block with 25 beds and District Hospital with 12 beds. In addition, there are four disaster relief centers in the district with a bed capacity of around 268 people. Migrants and residents who have no place to go or are in dire need of food are being kept here and fed with proper facilities. Each migrant worker is provided with basic facilities like a cot, mattress and mosquito net and also a dignity kit keeping sanitation and hygiene in mind. It consists of:

1. Toothpaste
2. Toothbrush
3. Bathing soap
4. Shaving kit (for males)
5. Sanitary napkins (for females)
6. Towel
7. Oil
8. Bucket
9. 2 set of clothing
10. 3 sets of undergarments.

CSR and crowd donation are promoted for providing more essentials in these centres. Dry ration is arranged with the help of donors and institutions for the people who are not recovered under the food safety net. The task of distributing food to everyone is accomplished by preparing long lists from the distressed calls on the helpline number. On an average, 10,000 packets are being distributed every day. Donors are also provided with the liberty of mentioning a particular area, where they wish to distribute the food packets.



Dignity kit for males and females

To ensure that the admitted people get safe food, following steps are being undertaken

1. The food is cooked in the block headquarters
2. Prepared food is distributed in the centres.
3. The food is cooked by the **jeevikadidis**
4. Appropriate precautions are taken while preparing the food and also while serving it.
5. Social distancing is practiced while cooking, serving and eating food.

Our on-ground health workforce consisting of around 675 ANM, 3463 ASHA and 199 doctors and other health staff is operative on ground in full swing. Keeping the safety of frontline worker as utmost priority, training programmes has been conducted through NDRF (National Disaster Response Force), to equip the staff with basic understanding and responding to basic symptoms for the viral infection. Major component was the use of mask and PPE material and basic precautions that needs to be followed.



Dry ration being distributed by the district administration

At the quarantine centres, monitoring is happening by attaching doctors, ANMS and ASHA. Through “Chakshu” Application, District is monitoring people who were home quarantined, where data related to migrant’s arrival, place, symptoms etc is being filled. Regular follow up is happening by updating daily symptoms and actions taken by Asha and ANM in the application. A pamphlet has also been put outside their houses, which is filled by ASHA every day on their responses of showing any symptoms. ASHA fills the pamphlet and puts her signature so that it becomes a transparent activity and everybody gets aware. To track the people not registered in data, pharmaceutical data is being leveraged and the patient is tracked on daily basis if containing virus symptoms.



JeevikaDidis making mask at their homes

The District Administration has stepped various response measure to avoid panic among consumer, biggest wholesalers and vendors have been approved by district such as Big Bazaar, Vishal Mega Mart and many more to home deliver essential food items and commodities. The process is very simple, a designated number has been given by each store, through messaging and WhatsApp consumer can avail the benefit of home delivery by paying minimal charge of 50 rupees. For vegetables, techniques of spacing out has been adopted. The vehicles which carry these essential items are being fumigated. To prevent the spread of virus, vendors are provided with masks and gloves and marking for the public has also been done in these places. Officials and members of NCC, NSS and NYK are always present in the markets to ensure social distancing.

The district faces challenges like lack of masks, which has been curbed by employing jeevikadidis to make the mask. They have been given order of 25000 masks, out of which 6000 have been already delivered. To combat the situation of overcrowding in banks, promotion of cash withdrawal through post offices is being encouraged. Additionally, 212 Grameen Daksevakas with mobile based withdrawal facility are engaged to provide door to door withdrawal facility up to 10000 Rupees in 11 rural blocks. For the herbal sanitizer, the municipal corporation is preparing it by themselves and sanitizing the main hotspots of the district. Moreover, the district administration is taking some extra efforts in the hotspots where people have positive results for the Covid 19 virus. To sanitize localities, buildings and streets two drones have been deployed. The drone sprays the herbal sanitizer prepared by the municipal corporation on their own to all the marked places.



3.2 Piggybacking Government Schemes and Policies to Combat the Corona Induced Crisis – Learnings from Chatra

- Neelesh Bhattacharyya & Ashish Kumar, Chatra, Jharkhand

In light of the declaration of COVID-19 as pandemic by World Health Organization, the Govt. of India has notified it as a “Disaster”, under Disaster Management Act 2005 and the provision of Jharkhand Epidemic disease Act 1897 has been also imposed in the state of Jharkhand. The district of Chatra, like the rest of the country, was also put under complete lockdown.

The District Administration Chatra is making substantial efforts to mitigate and control the spread of COVID-19. Long before the lockdown, the district has started its preparedness to combat the pandemic. It started with an assessment of its available resources in the district, and sensitizing the key officials about the spread of the COVID 19 as per the Guideline shared by the Ministry of Health Family Welfare, Govt. of India. When the lockdown was declared, the district activated all its resources, and started working on the forefront to control the pandemic. The district has set up a district control room, created a procurement cell, identified locations of Panchayat level Quarantine centers and Mega Quarantine centers and created a task force to identify the influx of people from other states of the country and abroad.

Advanced preparation and setting up of a procurement cell

During the assessment of the health facilities before the lock down, the district administration realized that - Chatra has a huge dearth of resources available at its health facilities, and in order to make people stay in the dedicated quarantine centers, adequate facilities need to be created at any cost. Hence, a procurement cell was made at the district level to procure essential utilities such as Triple layer masks, N 95 Masks, hand sanitizers, gloves etc. The procurement cell is being headed by the Additional Collector, Chatra district. The Aspirational District Fellows are the part of this procurement cell and the ultimate authority of this cell resides with the Deputy Commissioner. The prime objective of this procurement cell is to manage all the procurement related activities, be it procurement of essential goods and amenities, follow up with health depts. and block level functionaries and to see that, all necessary services are made available at the district and the block level. The need assessment exercise done earlier was a game changer in this regard, as it made the work of the procurement cell very easy. Till date, nearly all the essential requirements are in satisfactory numbers and are available with the Health facilities and block officials to tackle the pandemic.

Setting up panchayat level quarantine center

Establishing Quarantine centers at every panchayat, by providing all the necessary facilities, and to make it functional for the people who are coming from outside, was a mammoth task for the District Administration. In order to do justice to each and every block and panchayat, a task force team was created by the Deputy Commissioner, and all the senior officers were assigned 2 blocks each under their supervision. As per the addendum issued by Ministry of Home Affairs, GoI, it was also mentioned that the District Administration has to create a force of incident commandants, who will supervise the blocks under them, and provide necessary feedback to the block officials. In that context, regular follow ups were carried out in the blocks, by the incident commandants, and feedbacks regarding the necessary requirements were provided to the Procurement cell, at the district level.



Assessment of Quarantine centers by District Administration, Chatra

In Chatra, a total of 190 Quarantine centers have been established in 152 panchayats and 2 nagar panchayats. But when there was a huge influx of returnee migrants from New Delhi, Mumbai, Surat, and all major commercially developed cities towards Bihar and Jharkhand by bus, personal vehicles and even walking, the situation was about to go out of hands. In Chatra, 3500 people reached the border of the district, within a span of 3 days. In order to tackle the situation, and to make people comfortable, without causing much harassment, the District Administration created 17 Quarantine centers at all the 3 sides of the borders touching different districts and one state border.

Ensuring Food Security

The district has been implementing welfare schemes but whether the fruits of these schemes were reaching the person standing at the last mile was always a matter of concern. Chatra is one of the ten districts in Jharkhand associated with income poverty and it is also regarded as 'extremely insecure' on the food insecurity index of the state. During this crisis situation the District Administration Chatra became particularly active regarding this issue. The Public Distribution System (PDS) shops and Bazaar Samity were made active at the district level, and the District Supply officer was made the nodal to manage the entire food distribution system.

The practice of home delivery of essential items was also started. The prime objective of the district was to not let any person suffer from hunger during this lock down phase. Although the Chief Minister's *Daal Bhaat Yojana* and Didi kitchen by SHG women were working for many months in the entire state, its effectiveness was realized during this crisis time. The district opened some 42 new *Daal Bhaat centers* and 17 Didi Kitchen counters to provide free meals to the needy. Also dry ration is being provided to the people, who are too vulnerable and marginalized and doesn't have a ration card



Daal Bhaat centers in Chatra district

ArogyaKunji and Bike Ambulance

Apart from the regular welfare schemes, there were also some innovative initiatives started by the District Administration a year back, to improve the accessibility, affordability and availability of services. Two major initiatives – ArogyaKunji and Bike Ambulance service - were later adopted by the previous state govt. and budgetary allocations were meant to be done as Mukhiya Mantri Arogya Kunji Yojana and Mukhiya Mantri Bike Ambulance Yojana. *Arogyakunji* is a small bag given to ASHA workers, having all the basic medicines, which one can avail over the counter without any prescription. Bike Ambulance, as the name suggests is a motor bike based ambulance service to reach inaccessible/forest covered areas by any normal four wheeler ambulance. Both these initiatives are becoming a trendsetter in the recent lock down times.



Bike Ambulance service in Chatra

The villages are self-sufficient in terms of medicines and they don't have to walk long distances, just to avail a simple medicine of cough and cold. This *ArogyaKunji* is also helping the district administration and the healthy department to track the people, who are getting sick, so that health services can reach timely. The Bike Ambulance service is also helping the frontline workers to reach hard-to-reach areas for proper monitoring during this lock down phase. The Block Officials are managing the entire Bike Ambulance service to help the Health department staff and the people who require referral facility during medical emergencies for non COVID cases.

Only a crisis produces real change. This crisis has helped the district administration to assess its existing resources, created barren buildings into quarantine centers and utilized its human resources to the maximum. During any disaster, the immediate goal is to save the lives of people to its maximum extent. In order to do so, many welfare schemes, programs, implementing agencies overlap over each other – overlapping of funds, overlapping of programs and overlapping of departments are some common themes during disaster mitigation programmes – which technically we can denote as piggybacking of schemes. In Chatra, the early planning between all departments, assessment of stocks and creation of various working committees helped the administration to manifest its energy in unison. Utilization of available resources to maximum is the key mantra during crisis, and Chatra district is following this mantra.



3.3 COVID 19 Outbreak Preparedness: A collaborative effort in Latehar

- Dr. Pretty Priyadarshini and Rahul Raman, Latehar, Jharkhand

About Latehar

Latehar came into existence on 4th April 2001 before which it was a part of the Palamu district of the Jharkhand state. It is a predominantly tribal district with almost 46% of the population belonging to the scheduled tribes and more than 66% of the total population comprises SCs and STs. There are two subdivisions (Latehar and Mahuadanr) and 9 blocks in the district with a population of around 8 lakhs. The economy of the people revolves around the forest produces, agriculture, and minerals. Latehar is one of the most popular sites in Jharkhand amongst the tourists and has several waterfalls and hills and is blessed by the river Koel and its tributaries. It has 782 villages spread over 115 Panchayats and more than half of these villages are located in the depths of jungles with highly difficult terrains and limited resources.

The beginning of the fight against CORONA

It was early March when there were scattered discussions on the cases of Coronavirus disease in different parts of India and to be honest, the public had no clue that it would turn their lives upside down in no time. And, in no time the country was put under complete lockdown. While this was necessary to contain the spread of the highly infectious coronavirus and save millions of lives, the decision brought a sudden unsettling situation and chaos.

Without any delay, the Latehar District Administration formed a District Task Force under the leadership of the Deputy Commissioner. The task force had the officials from different departments so that they can work in a coordinated fashion establishing coherence including Civil Surgeon. As members of the District Task Force on Coronavirus, the Aspirational District Fellows (ADFs) have been involved with- outbreak response plan, communication and awareness, procurement of safety equipment, planning of quarantine and isolation centers, preparation of the containment plan, and creation of a diverse volunteer base in the district.

On estimation and procurement of inventory (including safety equipment for the health workers) for the quarantine and isolation centers in the district, ADFs have been closely working with the Civil Surgeon, District Program Manager, and Integrated Disease Surveillance Program Manager. It was very crucial to establish a Pandemic Management Plan and assign defined roles and responsibilities to the officials and the frontline workers. The drafting of the District Micro Plan for containing the local transmission of COVID-19 in Latehar was also extremely critical as this required a clear understanding of frontline health workers and how to deploy them once containment and buffer zones are identified. And with collaborative efforts, soon the district was ready with a comprehensive plan. This whole exercise required collaboration between the health, social welfare, statistical, and education departments along with administrative units at the level of block and circles. A series of training have been conducted so far including district-level functionaries, block-level medical officers, and frontline health workers in the light of outbreak preparedness and management. These training have been planned in a way that no social distancing rules were violated and the majority of these were conducted locally at block and Panchayat level aided with video conferencing.





IDSP, Manager taking a session on CORONA for the district level functionaries.



Block-level training for all the Medical Officers



Medical Officers further training the Frontline workers-ANMs

The idea behind the Micro Plan- a Holistic Approach!

This district micro plan is unique as it has been fine-tuned with the 'village' as a basic unit and will prove highly effective in case of an outbreak in the district and ensure surveillance on the quarantined cases. The immediate response team has a combination of the frontline health workforce, SHG (Self Help Groups) volunteers, and Rozgar Sewaks at the village level. The primary surveillance team includes an ANM (Auxiliary Nurse Midwife), a Sahiya (ASHA Worker), a Sevika (Anganwadi Worker), and a supervisor which includes an MPW (Multi-Purpose Health Worker) or a teacher or both. While the ANM will take care of the technical aspect, she will have added support from Sahiya and Sevika. The assigned MPW and teacher will be responsible for overseeing the village in terms of any requirement vis-a-vis essentials including groceries and medicines. Around 800 Sahiya didis are regularly engaged in a household survey in their respective villages and coordinating with their block response team.

Perhaps Latehar has gone a step further in terms of planning this at the village level utilizing the already existing frontline workforce and establishing coordination between them with the help of adequate training and sensitization workshops through regular video conferencing and other means of communication.



A team of doctor, MPW, and support staff on the field



Sahiya didi enumerating do's and dont's through wall writing

The Remarkable All-rounders- Volunteer Engagement

One of the most important tasks during the COVID-19 pandemic has been the formation of a large volunteer base for the district within a short time. Several civil society organizations (ex. Nehru Yuva Kendra, Starlight International Charitable Society), teachers, college students, and PDS dealers were marshaled in the district to ensure that communication and awareness reach to the interior, hard to reach regions of Latehar. The number of volunteers eager to participate in COVID-19 related relief work exceeded the district administration's expectation. More than 3000 members of the SHG, 400 members from 7 civil society organizations, 200 plus teachers, mukhiyas, and rozgar sewaks have been operationalized in the district in this short duration. The creation of a large and diverse volunteer base from within the district has ensured that no single body/individual is overburdened with public information outreach, and the awareness is spread in areas where miking and IEC materials wouldn't be able to reach otherwise. This team of motivated individuals will also help ensure quick response once a patient is identified, and the containment zone and buffer zone are marked.

To ensure the volunteers' effectiveness, the foremost challenge was their training on important COVID-19 related information and safety measures. The training was coordinated in smaller groups via video conferencing. The volunteers were divided as per their respective organizations for this purpose to ensure two-way communication. Various district-level health officials were also pooled in to ensure accurate dissemination of information regarding their functions and safety. Once the volunteers were briefed about the important aspects of their tasks, they were encouraged to ask questions to strengthen their understanding. This training has been followed with a regular distribution of various educational materials via Whatsappgroups to the volunteers. These materials include video and written content on hand-wash, social distancing, the importance of masks, etc. The Whatsapp groups are also being used for reducing the communication gap between the volunteers and the district administration. They have been encouraged to reach out to the district team with their suggestions and doubts at all times without any hesitation.

The motivation of the volunteer workforce has been exciting, as they have been extremely forthcoming in taking up responsibilities. The young volunteers at Nehru Yuva Kendra, Vedic Society, Art of Living, Vikas Bharti, and Starlight International are spread across the district and are taking the challenge as an opportunity to contribute effectively. While these organizations are otherwise engaged with wide-ranging interventions in the district, to fight this pandemic they have joined hands. In a district-level meeting organized with all the active CSOs, the heads of these organizations pledged their unequivocal support to the district administration in fighting this pandemic.

Small Steps for a Big Leap

Concerted efforts of various partners involved in this fight are reassuring. The organizational strengths displayed by the health workers and diverse volunteer bodies is a testament to their vast enthusiasm. With their co-ordination and hard-work, the district administration will certainly be able to put their best foot forward whenever any challenging situation emerges.



The volunteers on the field delivering essentials in hard to reach areas of Mahuadanr



3.4 Combating the Ill Affects of Corona Through Protective and Food Support Programs – Efforts of Gumla, Jharkhand

- Shirshak Mohanty and Jyotishmoy Deka, Gumla, Jharkhand

Immediately after the *Janta Curfew* on 22nd March the district administration in Gumla had swung into action in order to improve the preparedness in the district to contain the Coronavirus outbreak. The Aspirational District Fellows (ADFs), under the overall guidance of the district administration got involved in strategizing the support services, procurement of essential equipment and steps for containment at the district level. A War-room for COVID19 was formed on 24th of March. Since then the mandate of the COVID War Room has been to coordinate with the District Control Room, track returnee migrants, provide support services to people from the district who are left stranded in other states, manage the entire COVID control program, set-up quarantine centers at block level and district level, and set-up a dedicated COVID hospital at the Sadar Hospital, Gumla.

The pandemic was considered to be a war like situation and all the senior officials in the district were assigned a certain task force and flying squads. Daily reports of the latest measures were to be reported in this group. Initially the visits and coordination was a bit overwhelming for the officials because of the topographical challenges and there was no particular plan in place. But gradually as the ownership and roles became clear, the coordination was better.

The Coronavirus crisis was sudden, already its growth had taken an exponential path, and the remedial measures had to be taken with little lead time. The countrywide lockdown was implemented and with that job security, specifically for people from the unorganized sector, and even free movement of the general public, got curtailed. There was a general sense of panic among the public and there was massive rumor mongering. To address this the ADFs along with the District administration formed groups to address specific issues and looped in the CSOs and Youth Groups active in the district for these initiatives.

Procurement of PPEs

Initially the district had to ensure that there was adequate supply of Personal Protection Equipments (PPEs) like normal 3 layered mask, N95 mask, PPE kits, sanitizers, and gloves. The process usually followed for procurement would have made it time-consuming. However, time was of essence here. A quick solution for fund mobilization had to be found out, and the CSR funds could have played a crucial role in this scenario. The ADFs reached out to the agencies like BPCL (Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited) and ONGC (Oil & Natural Gas Corporation) to help the district administration and was able to mobilize around Rs 25 Lakhs through CSR funding.



All medical equipment necessities have been provided mostly through CSR funds

Helping hands initiative

A Helping hands initiative was launched on 30th March to provide dry ration to a group of around 10,000 needy, out-of-work people and households with old, handicapped or pregnant women with the help of Block and Panchayat level workers, JSLPS and PRADAN . This initiative aims to cater to as many people in need as possible in collaboration with various semi-government and non-government entities. The DDC (District Development Commissioner) ,Gumla was made the nodal head for this initiative. The initiative was launched initially in Gumla Block and has now spread to all the 12 blocks in the district. In most of the blocks the distribution is being done efficiently. In some places, where the communities didn't trust the essentials being provided by the NGOs, various awareness initiatives were undertaken. Till date the awareness drive has an outreach of almost 6000 households and nearly 50,000 people in 4 blocks.

Community kitchens for providing cooked meals.

Community kitchens to provide cooked meals to the needy in the village was started in the first week of April. This was initiated by the JSLPS, through their SHGs in almost all the blocks. A public building, in close proximity to a maximum number of villages, was used to cook meals two times a day and anybody who visited the Centre was fed. This decentralized initiative has really been helpful for all those who could not make it to the block distribution Centre, especially old and small children. In the initial phases, logistics was a major issue as getting essential goods delivered to far off communities was difficult, but with time the plan and strategy have been efficiently implemented. As on date some 200 community kitchens have been set up directly or indirectly in various parts of the district.

Bhojanrath initiative with SHGs

A BhojanRath initiative was launched by the district administration, with support from the local NGOs, on 1st April to provide cooked meals for migrant workers stranded in Gumla and to the quarantine centers in each block. It was observed that many migrants, drivers and other inter-state personnel were trapped in the district. They did not have any source of proper cooked meals as all roadside hotels were closed. As part of this initiative, the program coordinators of 3 NGOs (Jeevan, PRADAN and Awesome Health and Educational Trust) were identified as nodal agencies in charge for specific routes. In order to meet the cooking needs of such a large number of people multiple SHGs were involved. Till date the initiative has involved a total of 20 SHGs from 6 blocks. In other blocks food essentials are being distributed with the contribution of almost 200 people both in terms of efforts and resources.



Bhojan Rath initiative

Home delivery of groceries with Awesome Health and Educational Trust

For last mile delivery of essential commodities and groceries, home delivery of groceries is being undertaken with the Awesome Health and Education Trust in the entire Gumla district. This was started immediately after the first lockdown notification as the administration wanted people to stay indoors as much as possible. Hence two local NGOs (Jeevan& Awesome Health and Education Trust) and the Gumla municipality came up with this

plan of home delivery of essential goods. There were occasional glitches, but as on date the program is running smoothly. The Gumla administration along with the partner CSOs have enhanced the safety measures for the thirty delivery personnel involved in this initiative. Till date they have catered to about 500 households in Gumla town itself and every day around 50 households are getting added to the list for the entire district.

The last three weeks have been a great learning experience for all the stakeholders who decided to come together to converge their work, with the district administration taking up both the leadership and coordinating role. A host of protective measures are being undertaken to stop the spread of the deadly Covid virus. Most importantly though the district administration along with its partners are working on a mission mode to ensure that no people in the district go hungry in this time of crisis.



Involving NCC cadets to transform sports field into vegetable market



3.5 Travails and tribulation of anchoring distress calls during COVID "

- Sushmita Jha and Shubham Singh, Dumka, Jharkhand

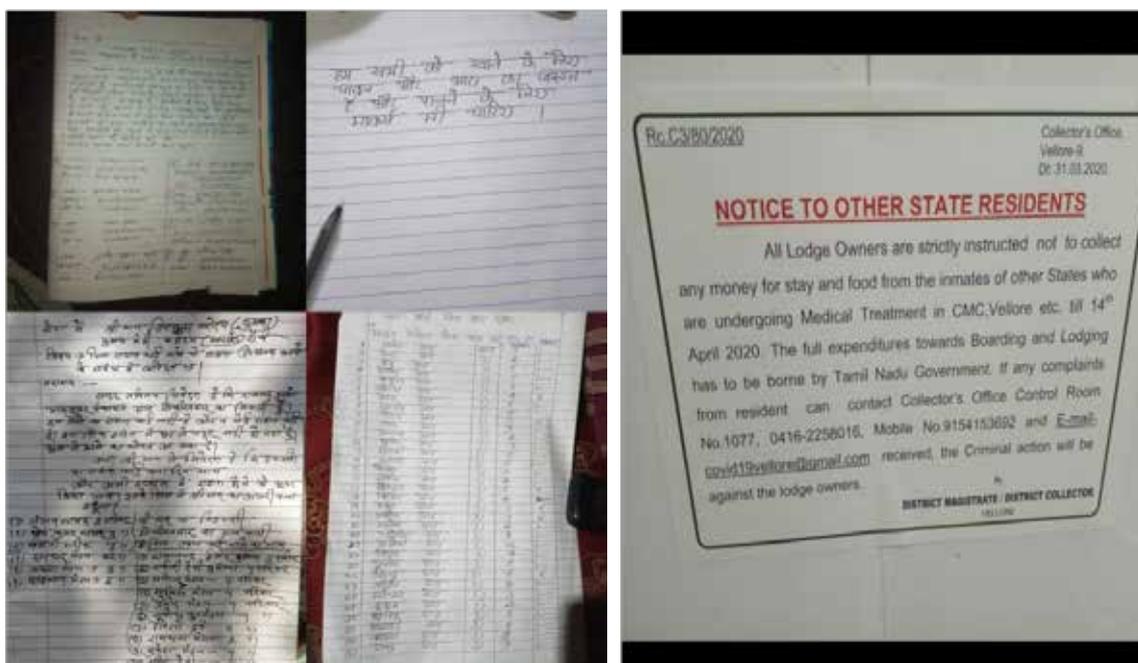
We were asked few days back about “how are we (ADFs) coming out of our comfort zone in response to this crisis?” I didn’t have an answer to that. Rather it kept me thinking if I am really coming out of my comfort zone in any ways. But after giving it some thought what I could think was just one thing that “in normal days I am slightly irresponsible with picking up the calls but during these times, as our numbers have been shared on the various platforms, we receive number of calls from our District/other Districts/other States, majorly relating to issues being faced by the beneficiaries in accessing the essentials like-medicines, food, cylinder etc. The phone has been ringing all the time. There are times when I feel overwhelmed and want to take a break but the next moment one thing strikes is that “you don’t know what this call means to the person dialing the number” and all the fatigue vanishes. This realization motivates to go ahead and attend each and every call and also ensure that the missed calls are also dialed back. We are trying to the best of our abilities to ensure that the issue is resolved or some immediate relief is provided.

Till now we have reached out to 168 people from various locations and still continuing.

| S. No | Location of Calls | Number of People | Belongs To | Category | Occupation/ Reason of being Stranded | Helped By | |
|-------|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| | | | | | | NGOs | Other Ways |
| 1 | Delhi, Majnu Ka Tila | 16 | Dumka (2), Banka (14), Bihar | Men (30-67 yrs) | Rickshaw puller | Sarvhitya , Central Hunger Helpline, Healthy Ageing India | - |
| 2 | Delhi, Govindpuri | 13 | Dumka | Boys (10) and girls (3)-21 yrs | Through PMKVY | - | HR and Admin in charge of the company |
| 3 | Haridwar, Uttrakhand | 1 | Dumka, Block-Ramgarh | Boy (21 yrs) | Tourist | Sankalp Prakash Sanstha | Control unit, Haridwar |
| 4 | Maharashtra | 81 | Dumka | Men | Working for a company | - | the contractor |
| 5 | Vellore, Tamil Nadu | 2 | Dumka | Boy-23 yrs | For the treatment | - | Through control unit Vellore |
| 6 | Godda, Jharkhand | 1 | Godda | Women | Residents | - | Control unit Godda |
| 7 | Dumka, Ramgarh block, Jharkhnad | 7 | Dumka | Families | Residents | - | Control unit Dumka |
| 8 | Banka, Baunsi, Bihar | 33 | Banka | Families | Residents | - | Linked them to the control unit Banka + ADFs Banka |
| 9 | Bangalore | 13 | Dumka | Men (35 yrs) | Works for a factory | Caritas India | Control Unit Bangalore |
| 10 | Hyderabad | 1 | Dumka | Men (25 yrs) | Works as a chef | - | Control unit Medchal-Malkajgiri District |

The Process

Once we receive the calls, we are extensively using Social media and other online platforms like Twitter/Facebook /WhatsApp/Gmail .We take up their details and grievances through call, messages or WhatsApp. We then collaborate with other ADFs, colleagues, friends, relatives, professionals to seek their support in reaching out to the NGOs /individuals known to them, who may provide some assistance. We simultaneously reach out to Administration and NGOs/individuals. As most of the Administrations are active on Twitter/Facebook, we are looking for helpline numbers (control unit of respective Districts/States), any notification or mechanism for respective issues if posted by the administration on these platforms. The mechanisms from the administration's side ensures sustainable redressal and if in case it takes some longer time in redressal from their side, we try to ensure immediate relief through the NGOs /Individuals. (for e.g. *Feeding India, Rise Against Hunger.*) .If requested by the respective NGOs /individuals, we are providing them the adequate information through Gmail and other social media



Challenges

This engagement doesn't come without challenges. Some are:

Effective operationalization and implementation

It would not be right to say that the mechanisms are not in place, but as the crisis was unprecedented, these mechanisms were to be streamlined, publicized, made accessible to those who due to some reasons can't access it. Effective operationalization and implementation takes some time and we are aware we have prepared ourselves for this crisis in a very short span of time, thus few operational issues remains unavoidable.

Sustainable redressal

Ensuring Sustainable redressal is another challenge because NGOs/individuals can provide immediate relief and as we are aware the lockdown can be for a longer period thus sustained solution to this is needed. (For example some don't have ration card, some Administrations are providing relief to stranded on case to case basis, there is no guideline/notification for mechanisms in place to help those stranded from other states at times)

Emotional Outbursts.

There is sense of desperation and frustration among the target group, the main reason for this being repeated calls to the same individual enquiring about his/her grievances yet delay in providing the required help. At times we find ourselves at the receiving end of this and they also refuse to share the details saying that everyone is just asking the same details but doing nothing to help.

Lack of efficient Database management

It has also been observed that assistance is being provided to the same individual or group repeatedly by various stakeholders. This leads to repetition of work and under utilization of resources. In times of crisis like this, time, energy and resources are under tremendous strain and an efficient management is must to reach to maximum numbers of beneficiaries. So an efficient database management is the need of the hour.

Lack of awareness, inaccessibility of information

There were many instances when it was found that food and shelter is being provided in the localities from where calls were made but they were not aware about it. The two reasons for the same being inaccessibility of the information and apprehension in moving out of their homes because of the fear of police or administration (a case from Delhi-Majnu ka tila-the person was arrested when he was going to the nearest meal center). One way of addressing both these issues would be proper dissemination of information beforehand.

Lack of sensitivity amongst stakeholders

In crisis like this, each one of us are emotionally strained due to various factors but we need to understand that we as professionals are more trained and equipped to deal with this than the poor and marginalized sections. Therefore it is expected of us to be more sensitive and empathetic to them. There are instances where people calling for help are being asked questions such as *“why they didn't carry sufficient money, how come their supply exhausts so quickly, why were they so careless to venture out somewhere away from home etc”*. This harms the dignity of an individual and such questions should be avoided as far as possible.

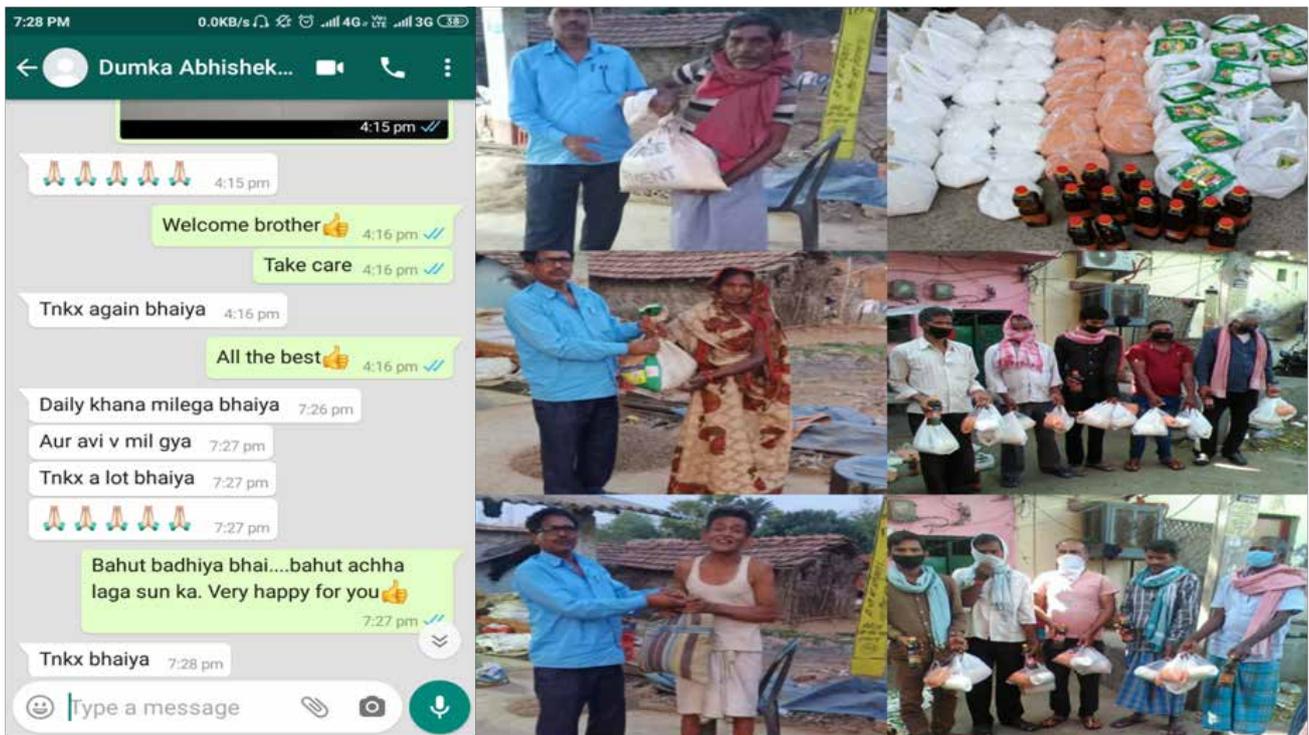
Learning Outcomes

Since this crisis is unprecedented and massive at scale, a lot of personal and professional learnings can be derived from this. Some of them are:

1. Life is very unpredictable and more so for the poor and marginalized sections of the society.
2. In time of crisis, the most important asset is the intent and the willpower, and the willingness to go that extra mile to help those who are in need.
3. Resources, both human and material are ample in quantity; it's the efficient management and allocation that makes the difference.
4. Networking and Social Capital play a very important role in such crisis. There are a lot of organizations and individuals working in every part of country. A recent survey suggested that in 13 states of India NGOs provided food to more people than government machinery. But many of them are doing it independently. Through proper networking their usage and reach can be optimized much more times. Also a rich social Capital helps us to get access to a lot more information which we might not have.
5. Last but not the least Team Work. This is a very crucial factor in such situations as the entire machinery is overwhelmed by the amount of work and this can't be achieved if we don't work as a team, sharing responsibility and motivating each other.

Conclusion

Sometimes you may feel receiving the call that you would not be the right person to resolve their issues. But at times people just want to be heard- you can feel that helplessness in their voices of “just not being heard”. In one case, when the person called me for the first time, I gave him the number of the control unit Banka. I mentioned to him that I look after Dumka but then he requested “if he can just be heard once” as he wants to share his problem. I heard him and he thanked me just for listening though we resolved his issue later. So **don't forget to take these extra miles because this means a lot to them!! After all what's more satisfying than seeing this “sigh of relief”!!!!**



3.6 How to contain a contagion?: A case study from Aurangabad, Bihar

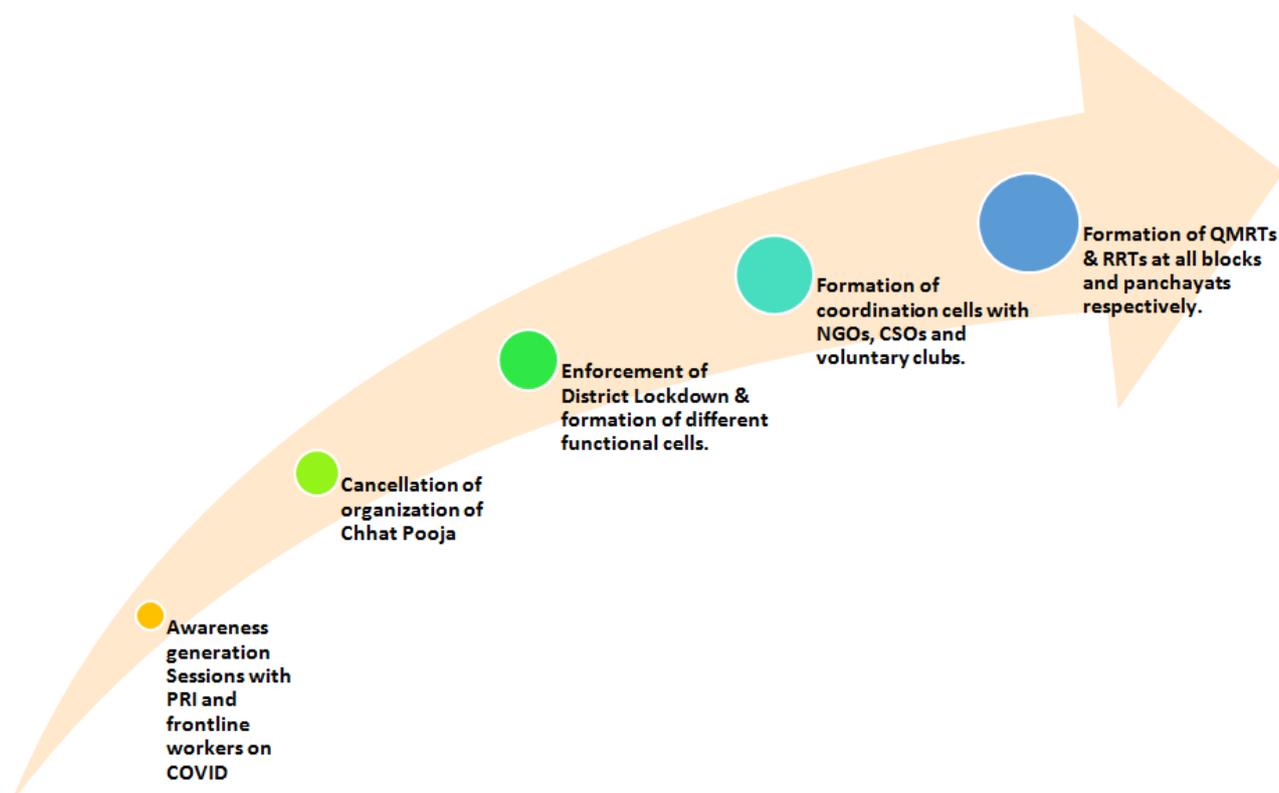
- Imad Ul Riyaz and D V Sampath Kumar

Background

COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus. This new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. India received its 1st case on 30th January 2020 while Bihar confirmed its 1st case on 22nd March 2020. After these initial cases tally of the infected persons in India stands at 9152 and that of Bihar is at 44. Aurangabad, which is a district from the southern part of Bihar bordering Jharkhand has not yet received any positive cases and is standing at a relatively safer position when compared to the rest of the districts in the state as well as the country.

Implementation

As soon as the news of the Coronavirus outbreak spread across the country the district administration started taking all possible measures and actions to prevent the contagion in the district. The district administration decided to tackle the pandemic in a rather bottom up way through discussion and planning with the local people while keeping in mind the difficulties that may arise due to various conditions at the ground level. The district administration has taken the following key actions in order to better enable the process of bottom up planning and reporting:



Even before the announcement of lockdown the district magistrate sensed a need for awareness regarding COVID-19. Being a relatively novel disease, the information and so is the knowledge of the PRI and Front-Line Workers regarding the same is very limited. To tackle the same district administration has teamed up with CARE India to develop IEC material and subsequently conduct awareness generation sessions with PRI & FLW to provide them useful information regarding COVID-19.

are placed in quarantine camps. A Shelter less Cell has setup 4 centres across the district to take care of the basic needs of the shelter less across the district.

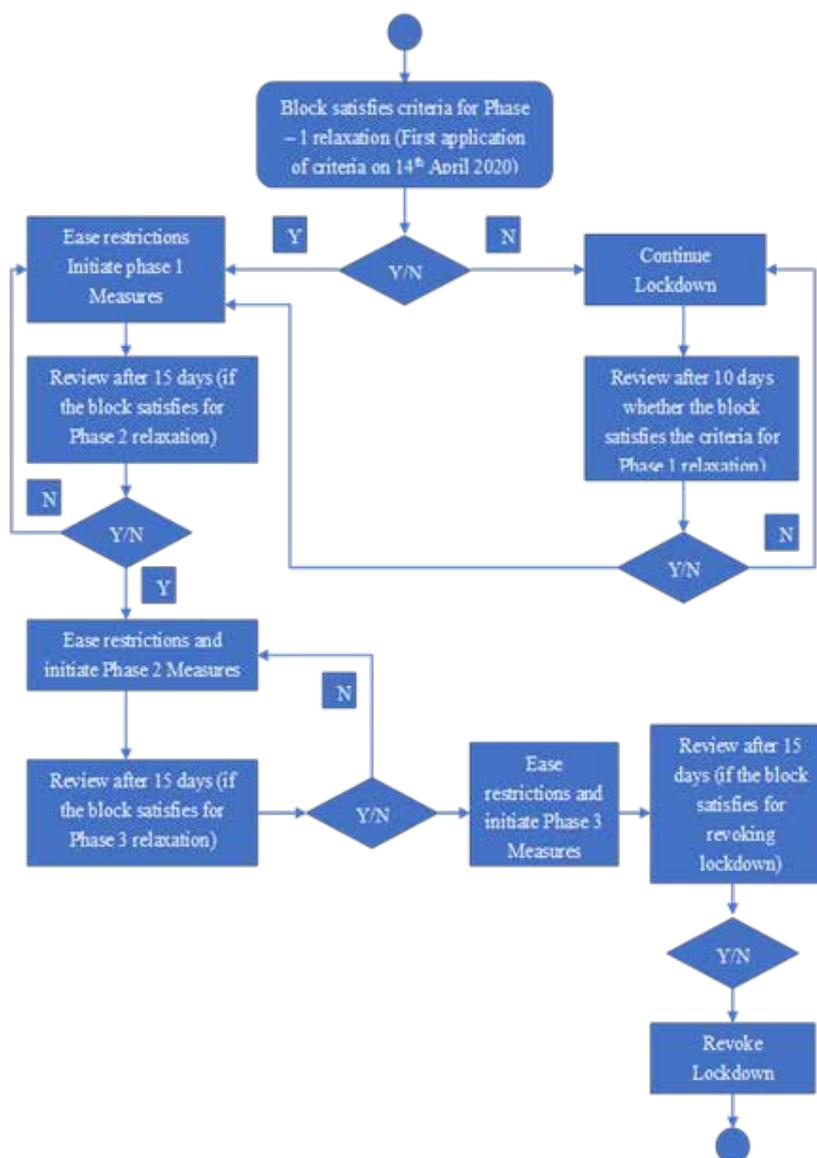
Till date 7673 people who've returned into the district are being tracked daily via home visits or telephone calls to track if any symptoms arise. 129 members returning from foreign travel and 6971 domestic and internal travelers within Bihar have been identified and put under home quarantine. Another 695 members that've entered the district after the implementation of lockdown have been put under various quarantine camps that have been setup across the district.

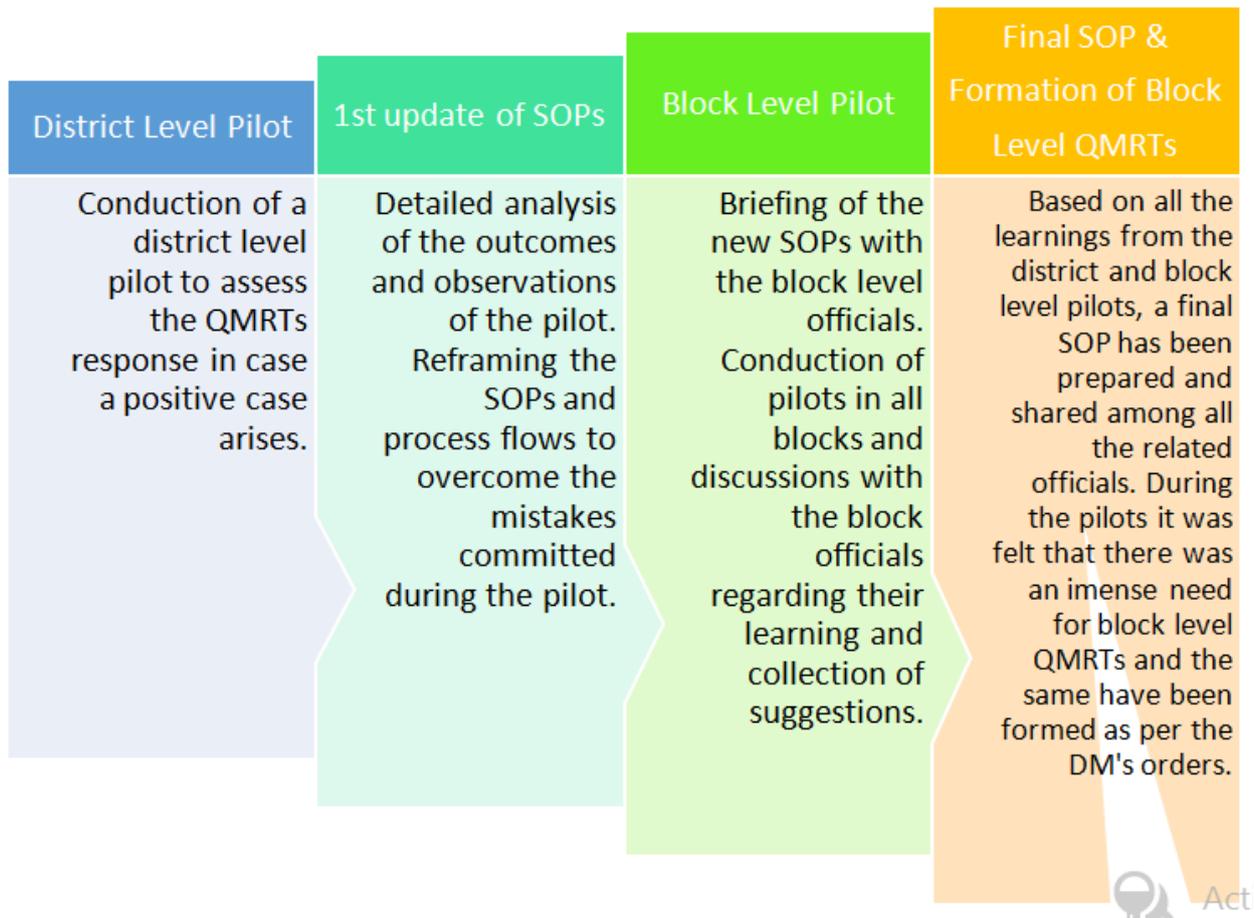
Generally during such emergencies, the efforts of NGOs, CSOs, Voluntary Organizations and the district administration often overlap, creating problems such as duplication, uneven distribution of efforts and misuse of funds. To avoid such problems Procurement Cell has been created to ensure all these parties share information about the kind of activities

they're conducting. Through this collaboration NSS, NCC, Red Cross volunteer teams have been engaged in crowded public places to ensure the maintenance of social distancing. Additionally, WHO has been working on the surveillance and closely monitoring the status of the suspect cases, testing which is being conducted and providing timely inputs on improving certain key parameters that are required for effective combating of COVID-19.

As Aurangabad was gearing up for handling any positive case through by conducting several mock drills, during these mock drills it was noticed that these teams are also needed at block and panchayat levels respectively to carry out their tasks with a quicker response and effectiveness. Immediately the district magistrate had ordered for the formation of QMRTs at all 11 blocks and RRTs at all the 204 panchayats of the district. Frontline workers (426 ANMs, 1793 ASHAs and 2327 AWWs) have been constituted in the RRTs that are responsible for conducting contact tracing of confirmed cases.

During the past few months, several reports have indicated that young and old people are at higher risk of getting infected by COVID-19. To ensure their safety the district administration has mapped all the panchayats having higher populations of children and senior citizens and subsequently planned special measures and surveillance in these panchayats to avoid contagion of the disease.





As on date Aurangabad, Bihar is safe from COVID-19 contagion, but it is also well positioned to tackle any future outbreaks. The district administration is simultaneously monitoring the economic slowdown and its effects on the general public, the vulnerable communities and is planning for the effective and immediate measures needed for an economic revival. Based on these inputs the district administration in collaboration with TADP Cell and CARE India is planning for effective lockdown relaxation strategies to avoid any future CORONA outbreaks and revival of the economic during the process.



3.7 Dantewada Deploying Multipronged Strategy to Secure Life and Livelihoods

- Basant Kumar and Prakash Rao, Dantewada, Chhattisgarh

Corona Virus: Deep impact on poor people's everyday lives

More than a month has passed since the first lockdown came into force and with the passage of time, it is being realized how COVID19 outbreak can't be confined to the boundaries of public health crisis alone but it touches a range of domains across the sectors. The multidimensional nature of development becomes even more evident when one looks towards the developing nations where the poor are the losing end. With nationwide lockdown coming into force and attracting appreciation globally, little did everyone know how it would hit the poor? It leaves many questions unanswered about how the vulnerable and marginalized are sustaining their lives in this unprecedented situation. Their loss is not limited to apparent health conditions that might occur due to the deadly virus but sadly, it appears like a choice between misery caused by their life realities and potential life threats from the virus.

Securing life and livelihoods

Dantewada, majorly a tribal dominated region, is one of the remotest districts falling in the left-wing extremism corridor. It has been the heartland of the ongoing conflict and its present context is further worsened by the outbreak of global pandemic. To address the emerging concerns amidst this crisis situation, District Administration has proactively formulated a multipronged strategy with a two-way focus on livelihoods and health of the people. District Magistrate emphasized the need to secure people's health and livelihoods. He explained how ignoring any of these two will have detrimental effect on their lives. So, the interventions in Dantewada broadly classify into the following two domains:

A. Health and Food Security for All

B. Veterinary services and fodder for the livestock and stray animals

A. Health and Food Security for All

Planning and Implementation

For realizing this goal, there is 3-tier structured team created from district to Panchayat level comprising of staff from various departments such as health, ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services), local governance bodies and food supply. They are all actively converging to ensure food supplies and health services reach the last miles in the district. The team began its work through problem identification and prioritization to find probable solutions, thus guiding the implementation strategies.

Comprehensive field level assessment with the help of local governing bodies was done and it was found out that issue of migrants needed special attention. District experiences both in-migration and out-migration. This has led to a good number of migrants working in the construction sector stuck in the district. Also on daily basis, there are migrants walking long distances back home from far-off places. There are also migrants passing through the district those who are returning to their homes in nearby districts. Despite the closed borders, these migrants have chosen forest pathways to reach their destinations. This is why many times it is the interior villages where the migrants need to receive the support. This makes it imperative to establish quarantine centers and keep necessary healthcare facilities intact for the incoming migrants. This has also led to food insecurity for the daily wage earners to pose a great threat to their lives at these difficult times. So along with healthcare services, it is important to ensure they are provided food, either in the cooked or in the form of dry ration. This is being decided on the basis of cooking facilities that they have access to. It has been seen wherever the migrant

workers stay in groups, they mostly cook together. If the migrant labourers are in the middle of their journey, they are accommodated in shelter homes with facility of cooked meals. None of this is easy in a place like Dantewada where the hilly terrain and absence of road connectivity adds to geographical inaccessibility. Most of these areas are accessible only through foot or motorbikes driven by a person who is familiar with the route. Recognizing these problems, it is being assured that people receive the ration and other basic essentials. This is why health department is also not only putting extra efforts towards preventing viral spread in the district but also ensuring that other health services are not hampered in the midst of Corona focus.

The following table briefly highlights the important services being provided under the health and food security domain:

| Support being Provided | Implementation Strategy | Impact |
|--|---|--|
| Healthcare services for the people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panchayat level surveillance teams have been activated comprising of staff from the district administration, women and child development department, health and rural development departments. • Situation reporting being done on daily basis by these teams. • Conducting basic health check-up camps (with adherence social distancing norm) at community level. Aanganwadi workers, Mitanins (ASHA) and the Patwaris major connect between the administration and people. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICDS services concerning health and nutrition security in the community being provided. This included ready-to-eat food packets for pregnant and lactating women. • Dry rations dropped off at the homes of children who depend on Anganwadi for their two meals. • Important services such as routine immunization, maternal and child healthcare etc. are being ensured. |
| Addressing food security by providing dry rations and cooked meals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created district profile of the migrant workers for needs assessment. • Panchayat level identification of migrants through the surveillance teams. It was found out that most of the migrants were staying together in groups for construction works across the district. This made relief work easier. • Ration kits that would last for 2 weeks are being distributed to people without ration cards, homeless people, migrant labour and people in waiting in the PDS. • Mapping of migrant labour that work in other district is also being done with the help of Patwaris and Panchayat Sachiv. It was found out that 3300 labour migrants from the district are stranded in other states. Maximum numbers of migrants are stuck in Odisha and Telangana. So district administration there has been approached for ensuring support. • However the challenge is to find the ones whom families have failed to get in touch with. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So far, cooked food distributed to nearly 1500 destitute and daily labourers. • Dry ration kits distributed across the district. |

Through these efforts, now district administration has a clear idea about people's needs and wellbeing. Such level of effective mapping of migrants and needs assessment was made possible only through the team efforts and well-intended plans.



B. Veterinary services and fodder for the livestock and stray animals

Simultaneously, it is also acknowledged that livestock being major livelihood option needs to receive more inputs from the administration. Livestock is very deeply connected with people's existence because people in these remote areas have limited income security and lead subsistence lives. With nowhere to go and no weekly markets taking place, people have lost the meager liquidity they had to buy their essential daily goods. Market exchange has stopped all of a sudden making people more vulnerable. Data shows that around 8,000 plus farmers are directly or indirectly engaged in the animal husbandry works. So, it is equally important to safeguard poor's livelihood assets.

In the view of this situation, District administration of Dantewada has issued a few advisories and official orders to Veterinary department to provide fodder to cattle and stray animal. This would help the animal husbandry farmers to cope up with the distress caused due to the lockdown. The availability of food for the animals remains a difficult task. Due to rumored role of animals in spreading Corona virus, animals are also further being ostracized, said the DDVS- Deputy Director Veterinary services. These myths have no logical evidence but have impacted the poultry sector in a big way and there is a movement towards vegetarianism fearing that meat is the virus carrier. In the wake of misinformation linking the disease to pets and local community animals, the animals may be deprived of food and essential veterinary care which could trigger aggressive behaviour of the animals, which may further escalate problems during the lock down. So to tackle all these issues, animal husbandry department is looking after the fodder requirements and veterinary services of the livestock.

There is a WhatsApp number circulated in the community to report any mistreatment or problems related to livestock and stray animals. Citizens are requested to record a video of at least 10 minutes of stray animals, especially scavengers (dogs, cats, crows, cows, jackals, monkeys, etc) around them as this would allow remote examination of the animal by the veterinary staff. Veterinary department is working round the clock to make sure animals are equally safe and secure. Henceforth, a project is also proposed by the TADP Cell (Transformation of Aspirational Districts Program Cell) and Veterinary department to sanction funds through disaster relief fund for the fodder and treatment for livestock and stray animals.

The following table briefly highlights the important services being provided under the livestock care domain:

| Support being Provided | Implementation Strategy | Impact |
|---|---|---|
| Fulfilling fodder requirement and providing veterinary healthcare for the livestock and other stray animals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making fodder and cattle feed available at people's doorsteps with the help of community volunteers. • Team of 40 senior surgeons and assistant doctors, along with 87 volunteers spread across the four blocks in the district to provide animal healthcare in the communities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives a sense of security to people that the administration stands in their support and is there for any kind of help. • Poor able to do home based livestock rearing. Backyard poultry models also being encouraged and facilitated at community level to address both financial and nutritional insecurities. • Helping to address the widespread rumors blaming viral spread on animals that led to abandonment of many animals. |

It is thus being ensured that the animals get their fodder and medicines along with the farmers being made aware about the hygiene and hand washing practices through field level teams. Creating and registering agricultural producers on an e-selling platform is already in the pipeline.

Takeaways & Way Forward

The work being done in the district in both the domains have revealed the integrated nature of development and also the significance of vulnerability reduction in the poverty alleviation discourse. The steps being taken by the district are eventually giving results and in the days to come, district would further amplify its efforts in other related domains as well. District Administration is trying its best to create synergy efforts to fight with this deadly virus.



3.8 Muzaffarpur District Control Room- The 'Listening Centre' in times of Disaster

- Annushree Tiwari and Jaishree Rathore, Muzaffarpur, Bihar

Muzaffarpur district is located in the Tirhut region of the Indian state of Bihar. It is amongst the most populated districts in Bihar. Muzaffarpur faces both drought and floods in respective seasons.

With a history of disaster in each season Muzaffarpur district administration has been on a hyper active mode to fight COVID-19 since day one.

District Magistrate along with all other officers both at district and ground level have been in serious action. Officers are doing micro-planning, surprise visits, review meetings, taking initiatives, speaking to and reassuring people. The administration is on its toes as it monitors cases, coordinates with their respective State Governments and trying to implement the lockdown in a smooth way.



One of the most important and effective tools used by the district administration of Muzaffarpur is setting up of CORONA Control room. A **control room or operations room** is a room serving as a central space where a large physical facility or physically dispersed service can be monitored and controlled. The district administration of Muzaffarpur, has set up a single-place single-window control room.

Out of many purposes that the control room serves, the primary purpose is to avoid confusion and duplication of information. This means, that the district control room acts as a repository of the necessary information.

The control room acts like the direct interface between governance at the district level and the public. This also signifies the importance of the listening element of the control room. In such times of disaster, when problems flow in from the various strata of the society; while the more affluent may be concerned about not getting the disease, others may have to worry about earning an income(which may be threatened by a disease or an anti-disease policy like a lockdown) , and for those away from home as migrant workers- about finding means of getting back to their homes and families.

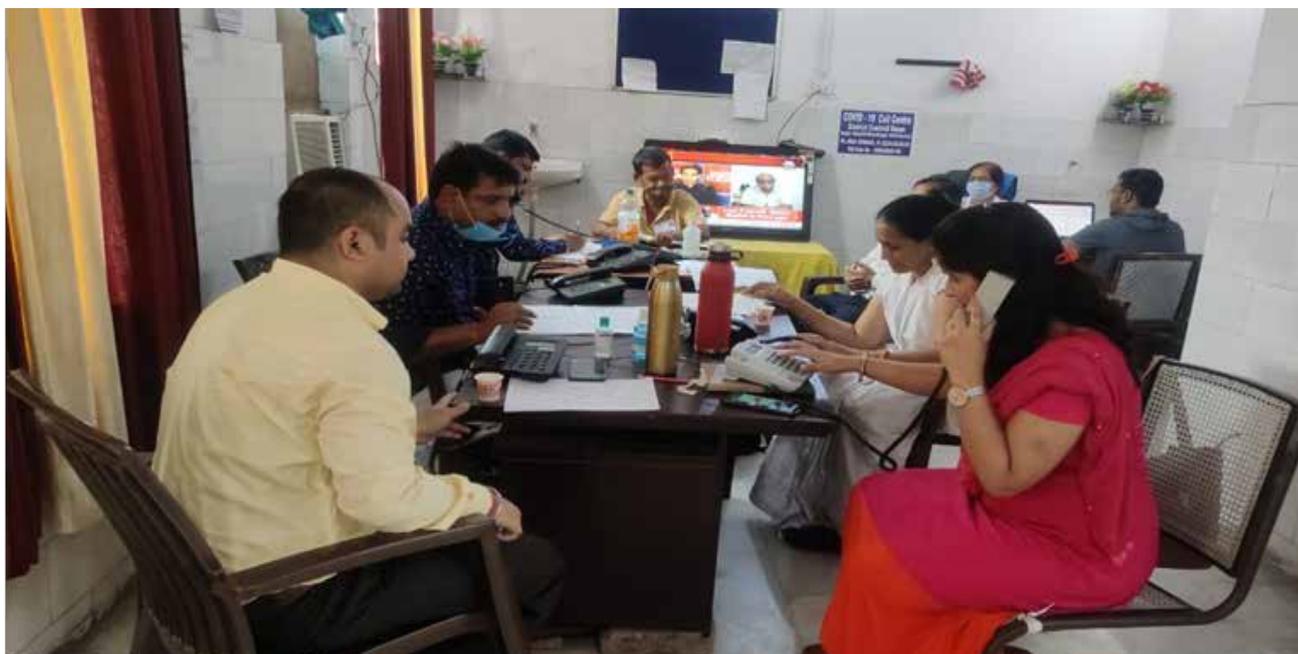
*It is a foundational task of a control room - To hear **what** the problems are, **where and when** they have exactly been hit and **how** that affects the victim.*

Muzaffarpur district administration has set up a 24*7 CORONA Virus / COVID-19 District Control Room which run in three shifts; fully functional from 25th March 2020 at Sadar Hospital, Muzaffarpur with 7 Landline Number 0621-2266050, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 58 and a Toll Free No - 180034656158.

District has also set up control rooms at the Public Health Centers of all the 16 blocks which has received total 4711 calls throughout the district till date.

The control room ensures a single incident command structure for coordination of all activities related to Covid-19 containment and efficient use of resource. The calls come to the control room not only for the challenges of health but also ration, domestic violence, migrants stuck in different cities, business malpractices, complains about crowds at public places, information of migrants in the district, extension of help for support from volunteers and Civil Society Organisations.

The district control room is also responsible for the Output variables to be generated at micro level on daily basis; No. of Suspect case of COVID-19 No. of laboratory confirmed case No. of deaths No. of contacts line listed: No. of contacts tracked: No. of contacts currently under surveillance: No. of contacts which have exited the follow up period of 14 days.



A doctor has been permanently appointed at these control rooms for the direct counselling of the patients as and when required. All the cases that arriving in from the urban area/ places in reach of Sadar/District Hospital are directly transferred to the District Hospital manager to instant action.

In the tough times of CORONA the district administration has also kept in mind the importance of mental health. Due to lack of awareness and panic created through news/ media/ WhatsApp there is an enormous amount of distress seen in the public. A Psychologist is also appointed in each control room to talk directly to the patient and calm them down.

Officers from the PHeD department, Public Welfare and Labor Welfare Departments takes care of the case of business malpractices, ration or wage problems, migrant laborers stuck outside the district and likewise. Members from district' technical partners like UNICEF, PLAN-India, CARE are also given duties in the control room.

A police officer from the SP office is also present in control room to tackle all the cases related to violence and all the calls with the cases of domestic violence are forwarded either to nearest thana of the victim's address or information is forwarded to *mahila* helpline (a call center set up in the district as a single platform for all the complaints related to women and child rights).

The control room has to face multiple challenges while holding the fort. The stressful times give rise to anxiety and stress amongst the community members. The lack of civic sense is also an uphill task to face. There are indeed useless calls coming day in and day out. The officials at the control room record each and every problem in a prescribed format. The format is then used to create a shift wise master sheet and compiled at the end of each day to delegate duties to concerned departments for necessary actions. The enormous amount of calls, unnecessary queries, rude tones, panick amongst the community and likewise does not stop these unnamed warriors to tackle the situation with utmost patience, love and care. They 'listen' to understand and take necessary actions as and when required.



4. Mobilising Financial Resources for Covid -19 Response

4.1 Ramgarh creating synergy effects through public-private partnership to fight COVID19

- Subhra Sen, Ramgarh, Jharkhand

Ramgarh district was carved out from erstwhile district Hazaribagh and is one of the 24 districts of Jharkhand. The Ramgarh district lies at the heart of the Jharkhand State, situated on National Highway 33 & 46 km away from state's capital, Ranchi on northern side & Hazaribagh on southern side 52 km away. Ramgarh is surrounded by North- Hazaribagh district, South- Ranchi district, East Bokaro district, West- Ranchi district & Purulia district of West Bengal State. Five rivers - Damodar, Gomati, Swarnrekha, Narki & Vairavi - flow through the district and water is used for irrigation as well as Industrial purposes . The Patratu dam which situated 30 km to the west of Ramgarh was constructed with the purpose of supplying water to Patratu Thermal Power Station. Ramgarh is known as a mining, industrial and cultural hub.

The district was made a district on 12 September 2007, consists of 1 sub-division, 6 blocks (Chitarpur, Dulmi, Gola, Ramgarh, Mandu and Patratu) and 361 villages covering an area of 1,360.08 square kilometres (525.13 sq mi). Being the third biggest mining district in Jharkhand, Ramgarh holds a strong position on the mineral map of the country. The district is endowed with a large and rich deposit of coal and coal bed methane and also possesses various other minerals like limestone, fire clay, etc. There is immense potential for industrialization of steel, sponge iron, cement, refractory and thermal power plants are being established due to coal availability and other large mineral deposits.



District Ramgarh: An Aspirational District with Strong CSR Backing

Despite its industrialization potential, the district has performed poorly in most development indicators, thus leading it to fall in one of the Aspirational Districts. Ramgarh is among Jharkhand's 19 districts identified by NITI Aayog as a part of the aspirational district programme. NITI Aayog's focused strategy to rapidly transform Ramgarh relies on the development efforts of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) as a part of Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) are vital in supporting the development of Aspirational District. These development initiatives are currently being led by Oil and Natural Gas Cooperation (ONGC) and Coal India Limited.

At present there is presence of several mineral based large scale industries such as Jindal Steel & Power Ltd,(JSPL) Patratu, Rajrappa Washery Project (CCL) Rajrappa, Central Workshop (CCL) Barkakhana, Oil and Natural Gas Cooperation (ONGC), Mandu, Patratu Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (PVUNL) Patratu, Dayal Steel Ramgarh Bihar Foundry & Casting Ltd. Ramgarh, West Bokaro Coal Mining (TATA), National Thermal Power Corp. (NTPC) Patratu and many other medium and small scale enterprises.

This is why the District Administration decided to foster the public-private partnership for combating the Corona crisis. This idea gained even more momentum when the Central Government cleared the way for companies to spend their CSR (corporate social responsibility) funds on Covid19 related activities.

Combining both the public and private resources for amplifying efforts

In a move to strengthen synergy against the global pandemic, Deputy Commissioner Sh.Sandeep Singh (IAS) directed the District CSR Coordination Committee (also Chaired by the Deputy Commissioner) to dovetail CSR efforts in the light of ongoing health disasters. Sh. Sanjay Sinha, Deputy Development Commissioner, Ramgarh, District CSR-Nodal Prabhari Officer and all the General Managers as selected representatives from the private/PSU companies are members of this committee. District Administration, Ramgarh has also issued necessary guidelines to the companies for supporting the District Administration in the current situation. This is to ensure active involvement and careful resource utilization of companies' funds which shall be majorly spent on providing relief to people and augmenting health infrastructure. Moreover, since the issuing of the letter on 23rd of March, companies have had to put a halt to all their operational activities and focus entirely on reversing the spread of the pandemic. Following this, CSR companies of Ramgarh have shown their sincere commitment and have demonstrated humanity in the most difficult times. CSR- Companies have taken multiple relief measures. Besides the employees, the companies have also touched various stakeholder groups through several COVID-19 initiatives.



District Collector, Sh. Sandeep Singh, visiting portable doctors' cabins

Augmented healthcare protective gear and equipment:

CSR agencies supported District Administration by providing medical supplies like high-quality thermal scanners, on the other hand each agency has taken the lead to thermal scanning in their operational areas. Cloth and preventive rubber gloves, masks to prevent wearer exposure to COVID-19 infection. Tata Steel Foundation also supports SHGs in manufacturing cloth masks. 5-10 Mahila Samuh being involved in mask manufacturing. Thus, various agencies have provided raw materials to SHGs for producing low cost masks at rupees 6 and later buy these masks from SHGs. These masks fulfill the demand of frontline health warriors. They have distributed masks at every operational panchayats. Addition to it, disinfectant products like sodium hypochlorite, bleaching powder, power and manual spray for general precautionary measures of environmental cleaning & decontamination have been arranged.



SHG members making masks

Portable Doctor Cabin and extra beds

District has recently installed extra beds and ventilators in Ramgarh District Hospital COVID-19 patients. Along with 2 portable **special ICU unit** has been created at Sadar Hospital, and portable cabin for logging of medical team by TATA and PVUNL. CSR-Companies are committed to provide health facilities to reduce potentially catastrophic threats of COVID-19. Further work on creating a sanitisation tunnel and COVID-19 sample collection room is in progress.



Portable cabins provided by PVUNL

Companies own hospital Preparedness

District Ramgarh has 7 hospitals operational by TATA, CCL & JINDAL. This hospital is operational for their employees. However, in the present situation the hospital and its facilities would be available and accessible for every individual. But as they came together to respond COVID-19, they have taken additional measures to combat by



District Collector, Sh. Sandeep Singh, visiting portable doctors' cabins

opening up their hospitals for the people of Ramgarh. Each hospital has preparedness to promptly identify and isolate patients with possible COVID-19. Additionally, the hospitals are also prepared for the possible arrival of patients with COVID-19. All hospitals have ensured that their staff are trained, equipped and capable in responding to a community-wide outbreak of COVID-19.

Awareness to mitigate COVID-19

CSR agencies of Ramgarh immensely helped District Administration to meet the challenge of COVID-19 pandemic especially in blocks where they have a direct presence. They have been engaged in various activities like, sensitising the community, spreading awareness on COVID-19 symptoms, importance of social distancing, hand washing technique and importance of wearing a mask. Demarcations have been made (1 metre apart) at local vegetable markets. They are also offering daily necessary food material in the form of the dry ration and cooked meals to the poor and needy residents as well as stranded migrant laborers. Regular usage of Disinfectant spray of Sodium Hypochlorite (1%) solution is also being done in nearby hutment areas and adjacent Panchayats. Also they are engaged with constant awareness on the seriousness of COVID-19 and ensure effective implementation of the lockdown.



Awareness to mitigate COVID-19 by CSR

Supply and distribution of essential food items

Since the fifth day of nationwide lockdown CSR agencies have been serving hot cooked meals and dry rations to over 54782 people. 4642 meals are being served from these kitchens every day to the homeless, daily labourers and stranded migrants. Currently we have 18 relief shelter homes across Ramgarh. People are being served hot cooked meals twice a day through 12 CSR-run community kitchens. Also, 2575 dry rations packets are being distributed in various underprivileged localities. Multiple CSR agencies are currently engaged in running these kitchens and distribution of the food at Panchayat and block.



Supply and distribution of essential commodities by CSR

Commitment to step up from crisis

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak has had and continues to have significant human, commercial and financial impacts all over the world. But this challenge is also an opportunity. At this moment, we must reaffirm our commitment in response to the challenge posed by the coronavirus by exercising our collective will, resources and religiously perform our duties in a humane manner. We are all passing through a difficult time. Therefore, requires a determined collective effort from all of us.



Read more stories from Part 1 of the Compendium here!

https://www.aspirationaldistricts.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Aspirational-Districts-Combat-Covid-19-_A-Practices-Compendium-Part-1.pdf



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