



Digital Emergency Relief Program
DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT foundation



DEF'S COVID-19 RELIEF INITIATIVES AS A DIGITALLY-ENABLED HUMANITARIAN ORGANISATION



**DEF's Covid-19 Relief
Initiatives as a Digitally-Enabled
Humanitarian Organisation**



DEF's Covid-19 Relief Initiatives as a Digitally-Enabled Humanitarian Organisation



Copyright 2020, Digital Empowerment Foundation

Disclaimer: All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be utilised, reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Report Prepared By: **Kriti Singh**

Designed By: **Vimal Pawar**

Published by

Digital Empowerment Foundation

Contact:

Digital Empowerment Foundation

Tel: 011-26532786

Email: def@defindia.net

URL: www.defindia.net

INTRODUCTION

India has been under lockdown since March 24, 2020, to break the spread of Covid-19 infection. While it is the only solution to avoid community spread, many like migrant workers, marginalised communities and poorest of the poor are adversely affected due to the lack of information, livelihood and connectivity. Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF) launched the Digital Emergency Relief Programme through its Community Information Resource Centers (CIRC) across 600+ locations in India who have been rigorously responding to the crisis by reaching out to the most vulnerable communities.

The CIRC centres with the help of the 5,000+ digital foot soldiers, after mapping the needs of the communities in rural regions, identified that the immediate need was for information dissemination and creating awareness. Awareness regarding the information on coronavirus, its symptoms, preventive measures needed and countering fake news and misinformation was done using various means like WhatsApp groups, leaflets and word-of-mouth. Further, awareness around the relief package announced by the government- Prime Minister Gareeb Kalyan Yojana- was raised through Digital Mobile Van, public address system and WhatsApp groups. This proved to be one of the most effective ways of disseminating information and ensuring social distancing.

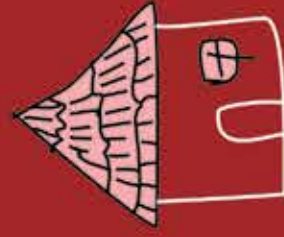
Simultaneously, DEF's digital foot soldiers created a relief kit which included dry ration to help families sustain for at least a month, masks and DEF Covid-19 information guide. These were done by local fund raising and administration support.

Several surveys and publications were also published along with visual documentation of the issues faced, several initiatives carried out and expert opinions on the same. The report seeks to document the numerous kinds of initiatives that were undertaken by DEF.

Geographical Presence



5000 Digital Entrepreneurs
Cadre of 3000 Digital Volunteers
equipped with digital skills



Community
Reach
5000+ Local NGOs
10000 + Villages



Infrastructure
laptops, smartphones,
physical centers and
internet connectivity



Digital Emergency Relief Program
DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT foundation

Program Support



TARGET LOCATION(S)

DEF is focusing mainly on rural parts of India due to lack of social security measures, unemployment caused because of slowed down economic activity, lack of awareness regarding necessary entitlements ad services and insufficient health facilities.

DEF is implementing the Digital Emergency Relief Programme in 89 underserved districts located in 20 states of India.

S. No	STATE(S)	DISTRICTS
1	Rajasthan	Alwar
		Barmer
		Bharatpur
2	Bihar	East Champaran
		West Champaran
		Jumui
		Vaishali
		Gopalganj
		Darbhanga
		Sitamarhi
		Begusarai
		Khagaria
		Purnia
		Bhagalpur
		Lakhi Sarai
		Saharia
		Madhepura
		Supal
Buxar		
Siwan		
3	Jharkhand	Ranchi
		Hazaribagh
		Deogarh
		Giridih
		Ramgarh



4	Madhya Pradesh	Guna
		Ashoknagar
		Shivpuri
		Hoshangabad
		Betul
		Rajgarh
		Chhatarpur
		Panna
		Rewa
		Shahdol
		Sidhi
		Singrauli
		Vidisha
		5
Bargarh		
6	Uttar Pradesh	Barabanki
		Ghazipur
		Lakhimpur
		Baghpat
		Farrukhabad
		Muzzafarnagar
7	Telangana	Yadadri distt.
		Wanaparthi
		Hyderabad
		Mahbubnagar
8	Uttarakhand	Tehri
		Almoda
		Bhimtal
9	Delhi	Kapashera
		Ghazipur (Delhi)
		Mansarovar Park
		Jaitpur ext.
		Noori Masjid
10	Andhra Pradesh	Anantapur
		Vishakapatnam
		Chirala Prakasam
		Kakinada
11	Karnataka	Bangalore
		Chamrajnagar
12	Tamil Nadu	Kanchipuram
		Nagapattinam
		Nilgiris
		Shivganga
		Virudhnagar
13	Haryana	Nuh



14	Maharashtra	Aurangabad
		Latur
		Gadhchiroli
		Palghar
15	Gujarat	Dahod
16	West Bengal	Murshidabad
		Malda
		Birbhum
		Nadia
		South 24 Paraganas
17	Puducherry	Villupuram
18	Punjab	Jalandhar
		Kapurthala
		Moga
		Amritsar
		Hoshiarpur
19	Chhattisgarh	Raigarh
20	Assam	Nagaon
		Morigaon
		Kamrup rural
		Jorhat
		Nalbari
		Barpeta
Total	20 States	89 Districts





159000

HOUSEHOLDS PROVIDED
WITH RELIEF

150000

MIGRANTS LABOURERS MAPPED
AND IDENTIFIED TO EXTEND RELIEFPRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF LOCALLY MADE
MASKS AND HAND SANITIZERS FOR BASIC SAFETY OF
MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

3084

PEOPLE INVOLVED
IN MASK MAKING

100369



MASKS PRODUCED

102525



MASKS DISTRIBUTED

24022

SANITIZERS
DISTRIBUTED

ESSENTIAL SUPPORT DISTRIBUTION

2000

FREE GAS DISTRIBUTION



121275

COOKED FOOD
DISTRIBUTION

75775

BENEFIT THROUGH
ENTITLEMENTSUPPORT TO MIGRANTS
LABOURERS/WORKERSMIGRANTS/LABOURERS IDENTIFIED TO
EXTENDED RELIEF

150000

COVID-19 RELIEF PUBLIC SCHEMES, WELFARE MEASURES INFORMATION,
ENTITLEMENT FACILITATION & DELIVERY, FACILITATION OF CITIZENS
SERVICES AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

47825

BENEFIT THROUGH
BANKING SERVICES

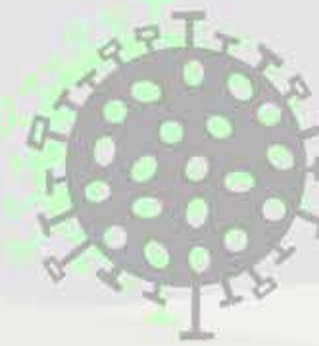
47500

COVID COMMUNICATION
KIT DISTRIBUTION

7600

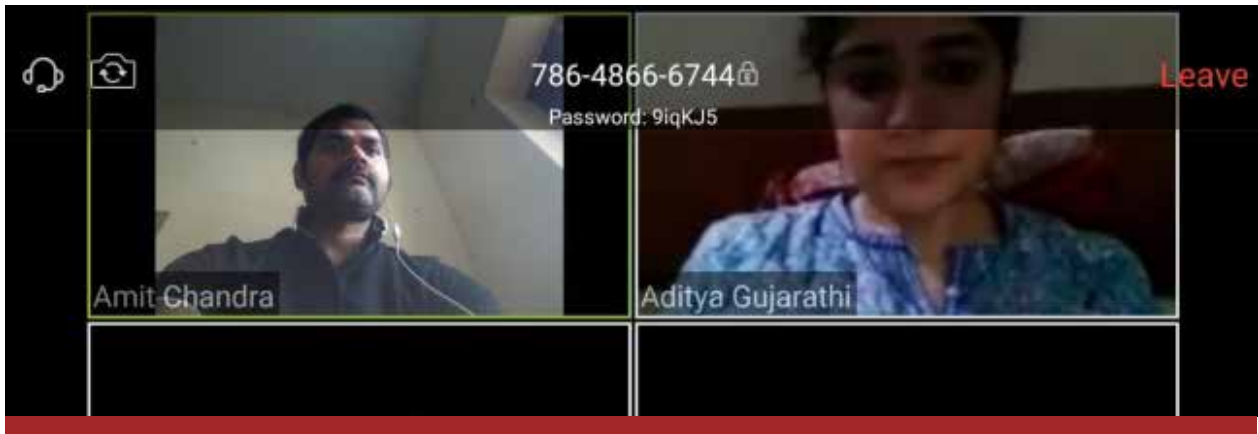
PARTICIPANTS IN
THE WEBINAR

106075

AWARENESS FOR
COVID-19



EDUCATION PILLAR



e-Learning

Even in these tough times our Project Officers are leaving no stone unturned to fight this pandemic situation. In order to curb the situation an organisation named 'The Centre for Social Justice' conducted training on 'Monitoring State Response to Rights of Vulnerable Communities' toolkit. DEF's project officers Amit Chandra, (Ghazipur), Sunil Babu (Chirala) and Tirupathi (Vizag) attended the training. It was designed to assist volunteers of Civil Society Organisations to both articulate and intervene in issues emerging as a result of the lockdown from a human rights lens. The purpose of this training was to become better acquainted with monitoring schemes announced by the Central Government post lockdown. Some of the schemes which were discussed were PM Garib Kalyan Yojna, Jandhan Yojna, Ujjwala and MNREGA. A clear understanding of how the benefits of various schemes will be provided to the community was explained. The training emphasised on the critical role of the volunteers in the time of crisis and how they can be change makers.

Online digital entrepreneurship programme for women

Further, to enable women entrepreneurs in rural India to explore and connect with the digital world to upskill and enhance their livelihood opportunities especially in the times of crisis, digital entrepreneurship programme for 5000 women is being conducted through online trainings on topics like financial literacy, livelihood opportunities in distress situations, Health and hygiene and e- governance among others. The first phase of the trainings has already started.



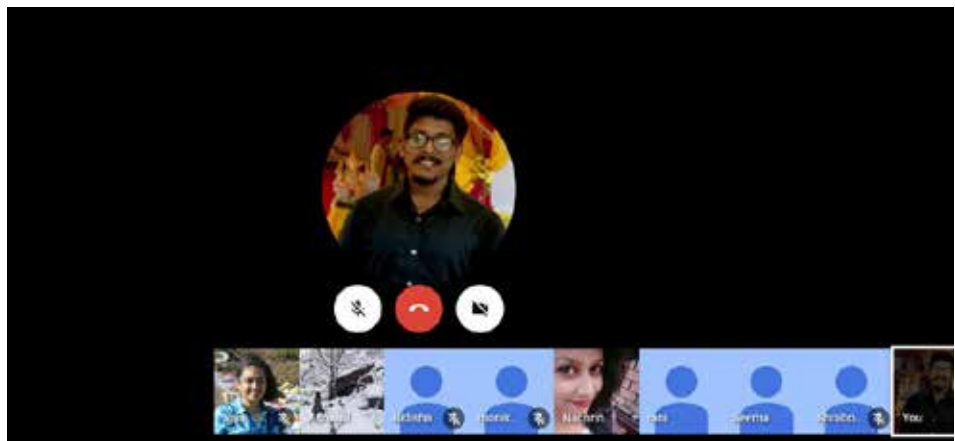
e-learning caters to educational requirement

With the onset of the lockdown due to Covid-19, one of the most important classes which use to take place regularly and were the source of income for all the ITpreneurs at CIRC centers was Digital Literacy. Soon they initiated e-learning through portals such as Zoom and Google First such class was conducted by Santosh Upadhyay, IT trainer of Karaiya centre for around 16 students. All the Centre Coordinators were also present to monitor the session along with other IT trainers from different centres. As a result, these became an alternative to cater to the educational requirements of the community. More than 15 WhatsApp groups have been formed through which around 200 children are connected across all Smartpur centres in India.



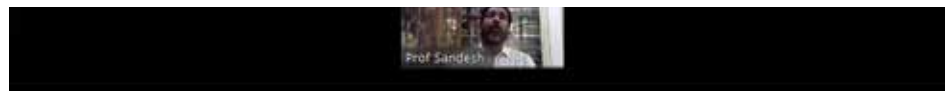
STEM e-Learning: Transition from blackboards to screens in rural India

The marginalised population are finding it difficult to keep up with the sudden shift to digitisation due to the Covid-19 crisis as they are deprived of proper infrastructure. DEF, through its efforts, is preparing the younger generation to fit in a technological advanced world. STEM for Girls (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) is a school based programme focused on life skills, career guidance, digital literacy and coding skills. After the country-wide lockdown these classes could not be carried out. So we at DEF initiated e-learning by conducting classes every day for an hour via WhatsApp and conference calls (for those not having smart phones). Currently there are 44 WhatsApp groups with 245 students in Assam and 57 WhatsApp groups in Telangana with 3350 Students. Regular feedback and monitoring is helping with innovative ideas to teach students in online mode.

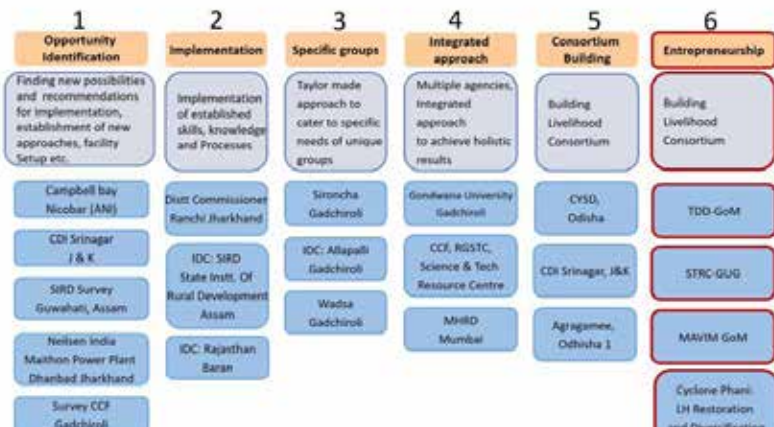


Webinar- post- covid-19- rural livelihood restoration & diversification

A Webinar was conducted on 'Post-Covid-19 Rural Livelihood Restoration and Diversification by designing innovative and sustainable solutions- Propositions. Prof. R. Sandesh, Faculty of Industrial Design Centre (IDC), Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay discussed about various aspects of the livelihood intervention. Professor Sandesh who specialises in design and livelihoods and also a principal mentor of Jawhar Mokhada (Palghar) tribal livelihood project at IIT, Bombay was another speaker for the session. Project Officers all across Smartpur centres in India attended the webinar and learnt ways to create livelihoods for underprivileged and artisans based on Design, Innovations and Technology. The webinar threw light on how to deal with need and possibilities to restore livelihoods in post Covid-19 situation. It gave a good opportunity for our Officers who are supporting and have undertaken Rural Livelihood Projects for the Covid-19 affected populations, either migrant labourers or poor families in the villages.



Activities: Intervention in Livelihoods



Online trainings amid lockdown

In just one month of being rolled out, the CSC Academy and Facebook initiative Digital Beti has been a wonderful learning process. One of our trainers, Madhurendra Kumar from Bihar submitted reports on the successful online trainings in the Nalanda block. Even with multitude of issues faced during these trainings, the Master Trainers did not lose hope. Due to COVID-19, the trainings in the three states Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu were put on hold as the Government announced ban on

Livelihood

DFID FRAMEWORK

- One of the model to address poverty
- Adaptable
- Made appropriate to local circumstances
- Made appropriate to local priorities

Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

IGE is Amit. Nathan from Gwalior running Industrial Training Institute

From Richin San (...), to All panellists and attend yes screen is visible yes I can here

From Veridha Chit... to All panellists and attend no voice

From Seema Mukh... to All panellists and attend I am Seema Mukherjee promoter from Anandi Enterprises - True Bottom line Consultancy supporting corporates to build brands based on creating focus on People, Productivity and Planet.

From Richin San (...), to All panellists and attend Thanks sir kindly invoke your number

From Consultant... to All panellists and attend good evening myself guru bhaijange from maharashtra working with marim and also develope own micro farming model of 75 units within 3000 sq ft

To: All panellists =

Your text can only be seen by panellists





HEALTH PILLAR



Tele-health and Tele-services

CIRC centers are advocating free and quality healthcare for all in response to COVID 19 crisis. Aarogya Setu, a government app to spread awareness of COVID-19 and to connect essential COVID-19 - related health services, has close to 350 downloads till date in all Smartpur locations and are regularly updated. This app augments the initiatives of the Department of Health to contain COVID-19 and shares best practices and advisories.

Furthermore, due to the lockdown, people are not able to visit doctors or health clinics for non-Emergency/Preventive healthcare. Our healthpreneur (Health Entrepreneur) at CIRC centers with DocOnline, an online doctor consultations platform available in multiple languages, are facilitating in conducting basic tests and doctor consultations through video/tele-calling.

These digital centers, in times of Covid-19, have emerged as an alternative to cater to the financial, educational, health and governance requirements of the community by enabling access to wireless network and the digital foot soldiers that help in facilitation of these services.

Ensuring proper hygiene

Before the lockdown was announced, with the rise in cases of Coronavirus, hand-washing awareness sessions were conducted in CIRC centers in Alwar (Ghasoli) and Bharatpur Hub(Ladamka) as well as Spoke Centres such Musakheda, Biderka, Medabas, Khanpur Mewan, Rustampur, Thekri, Daniyalpur Kheda and others. During the session the children were taught how Hand-washing can help prevent illness. The process involved five simple and effective steps (Wet, Lather, Scrub, Rinse, Dry) you can take to reduce the spread of diarrheal and respiratory illness so you can stay healthy and be safe. Children were also instilled with the habit of regular hand-washing, particularly before and after certain activities, is one of the best ways to remove germs, avoid getting sick, and prevent the spread of germs to others. Free soap samples were distributed among the children.





GOAL: Be the change you want to see

What would you do if someone in the current situation came to your home without a mask? Will you ask them to leave immediately? Our GOAL mentee Subhadra from Nuapatna in Odisha faced this situation. Her milk supplier, a middle-aged woman came early in the morning like she does every day to deliver the milk, but she was not wearing a mask. So, Subhadra first helped her sanitize her hands and the container with milk. Then she brought one of her handmade masks and helped the woman to put it on. She also told the woman why wearing the mask is important.





GOVERNANCE PILLAR



e-Governance

Women beneficiaries those who have the Jan Dhan account received Rs 500/- each. The Bhimapar CIRC centre in Ghazipur with the help of their banking correspondent-Prashant Yadav, went door-to-door to provide this amount through micro-ATM device and ensured that the beneficiaries follow Social Distancing and do not have to step out of their houses to stand in long queues at the bank.

Soon after the country-wide lockdown, the Central government announced the Prime Minister Gareeb Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) to extend relief to the poor and migrant workers who were the worst hit due to the crisis. Our CIRC center coordinators like Prashant Yadav immediately started to disburse the benefits of the scheme to the eligible persons and also provided with linkages to those who were not registered.

Samarth SoochnaPreneurs initiate door-to-door digital services

Kalu Ram Sen, a differently-abled person from Guna, Madhya Pradesh has been providing immediate relief to his community in the time of the corona virus pandemic. He is ensuring food for the vulnerable and generating preventive health awareness. 100 other such Samarth SoochnaPreneurs (Differently-abled Information entrepreneurs) across 100 locations in India have been putting effort to do the same with the support from Equally Able Foundation and Digital Empowerment Foundation. Their physical limitations are not stopping them from giving door-to-door deliverance of essential items, digital services and ensuring government entitlements to those in need.





SoochnaPreneur helps government to extend its schemes

DEF's Covid-19 Digital Emergency Relief Program which will aid in public schemes, information dissemination, entitlement facilitation and its delivery apart from providing essential items like ration and medicines. One of our SoochnaPreneurs in Jharkhand has collaborated with the local authorities to distribute cooked food to children and the elderly under “Didi Kitchen Yojna” of Jharkhand government. The SoochnaPreneur is also a self-help group member who has been roped in to carry out this work at village level. This has also helped the women of the group to have an alternate livelihood in times of the corona virus pandemic.



Extending e-Governance to farmers

Due to COVID-19, a new rule has been introduced for the farming sector. Now, in order to sell the crops farmers have to first register on the government portal, followed by obtaining a pass which is provided by the CSCs where our Smartpur Nuh team played an important role. The coordinators with CSC licence, in association with the district administration, not only verified their passes but also equipped them with masks and sanitizers to maintain proper hygiene. Also an appeal was made to the farmers to keep an eye for any misinformation and immediately report it to the local authority. As of now, nearly 250 registrations of farmers have been done and 3500 passes have been generated for sale of crops and vehicle movement.



SoochnaPreneur comes to the rescue of Anganwadi

Due to the lockdown, the anganwadi center in Barmer, Rajasthan, was closed. When DEF's coordinator Shakti Singh came to know that the food grains were not distributed he confronted the anganwadi workers. They did not agree and said that no such order came from the supervisor. Equipped with his smartphone and internet, Shakti Singh showed them the order and helped the workers in distributing the grains at door-step to the women of the community. Seeing this, the other anganwadi workers in the neighbouring areas took the copy of the order from him and resumed the distribution of the grains.



CIRC steps in to assist local administration amid lockdown relaxations

The Government has given relaxation to the MNREGA workers so that in this grave situation they can resume their work and earn livelihood. But due to lack of digital infrastructure and connectivity hampered in few blocks of Kollegal, Karnataka, the Panchyat Development Officer sought help from Smartpur Center in the region and asked to provide assistance in official paperwork such as application submission, issuing new Job Card, Aadhar number linkages and labour payment of toilet construction under Swachh Bharat mission and various other. Smartpur's digital connectivity and broadband service has played a vital role and PDO officers appreciated the same as the Hanuru constituency MLA Mr. Narendra Rajugowda inaugurated the MNREGA community work of Gopishettiyuru lake of Ramapura Gram Panchayat.





FINANCE PILLAR



e-Banking

The general public has been refrained from moving out of their houses due to the coronavirus pandemic which has limited the staff at general utility offices like the electricity and water department and are operating for few hours. In this situation, CIRC centers are going a long way by providing services of online bill payments by making the life of community members easy and simultaneously empowering them with correct information on how to stay safe.

In few CIRC centers, the banking correspondents have initiated door-to-door service to provide remote banking through digital access and micro-ATM to facilitate in transactions. As a result, in the month of April, transactions worth INR 12,980,000 were facilitated through micro-ATM.

Ensuring financial assistance

68-year-old Ahmed Ali, a resident of Saidanpur, has an old age pension and he did not withdraw money in the month of March, due to sudden lockdown. He had to wander a lot but he did not succeed in withdrawing money anywhere.

Finally one day Lallan Prasad Yadav of CIRC Saidanpur team called him at the center and took out the pension money that came into his account. Due to the month of Ramadan, Ahmed Ali was in the dire need of money. He seemed very happy and thanked Yadav for helping him out. Like Ahmad Ali, hundreds of people are helped every month in the centers of Smartpur Barabanki by providing benefits of schemes, withdrawing money, etc.



Extending financial assistance to the vulnerable

Pradum Kumar Verma is a resident of village Parsa post Safdarganj district Barabanki Uttar Pradesh. He is a farmer but due to the restrictions imposed on farming, his financial condition is deteriorating.

Under the 'Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana', INR 2000 are sent to the farmers in their accounts who are registered under it. "With the help of those rupees, I would have completed my agriculture and other requirements, but my 1st instalment had not come yet. I tried to withdraw it and spent a lot on travelling but to no success."

He then got to know about the CIRC center and its services. He immediately contacted Durgesh, one of the center coordinators, who registered his name. After a month, he finally got the outstanding amount of 5 instalments of INR 2000. "These 10,000 rupees helped me a lot. Now my family's financial situation has improved to a great extent."



Banking Services at doorstep to maintain social distancing

Abhinav Pandya is a SoochnaPreneur (Information Entrepreneur) from Guna, Madhya Pradesh. He has been working on the ground to ensure the community's safety from the corona virus by delivering money to their homes from the schemes that the government has put in place for them. Many of them, whom Abhinav is helping, didn't even know that such schemes existed; he informs them of their entitlements and helps them avail the same online. By providing banking services at doorstep, he is helping the villagers practice social distancing, the most important requirement to stop the spread of the virus. The major issue that the community was facing was that of access to banking. For this Abhinav along with other SoochnaPreneurs contacted bank ID distributors and immediately got themselves registered. The advantage derived from this was that being part of the DEF community, these people were easily able to withdraw money and give it to other members. The elderly especially have benefitted substantially from this.



Virtual digital centers in times crisis

Rahul from Raybaka near Alwar, Rajasthan, is a differently-abled person whose family sustains on pension. But due to the lockdown he was unable to withdraw money. Since the center was also closed due to the lockdown, he reached out to Irfan Khan to ask for his help. Irfan is the CIRC co-ordinator. He asked Rahul not to worry and immediately went to his home to provide him the pension through online banking.

This made him realise that the elderly and differently-abled person are the most vulnerable in these difficult time. Keeping this mind, he initiated a process of 'home-delivering banking services' to help people of the surrounding villages. He now provides door-to-door banking and digital services so that the people do not have to step-out during the lockdown.





LIVELIHOOD PILLAR



Alternate Livelihood in Time of Crisis

After reviewing the effects of COVID-19 all across the world, Digital Empowerment Foundation decided to conduct a survey to analyse how badly the areas are affected with COVID-19 and what is the impact of the complete lockdown in Rural India. It was analysed that masks which are one of the most important commodity required to protect oneself from COVID-19 is getting scarce in the rural community as responded by most of the locals in the community who took the survey. In order to address this issue CIRC Kollegal center headed by Digital Warrior D. Kumar(Project officer) and Madhuri(Centre Coordinator) has started manufacturing the masks at Hannur, Karnataka. The purpose of making these masks is to distribute to the needy people and at the same time some of them will be sold to the local Chemist shop to generate an alternative livelihood. The usage of these masks will certainly help in maintaining overall hygiene and better health condition. Currently, five local women have volunteered to stitch these masks.

Similarly, CIRC Barabanki team has made 18000 masks and it will be supplied to the Uttar Pradesh Police Department. Apart from this, the distribution will take place in other 40 locations in the district so that those in need can be provided with free. A group of women (around 10-12) consisting of our Soochnapreneurs and local homemakers are working day and night to produce these masks.

The production of mask making is not only helping in curbing the lack of availability of masks in in these regions but also in generating income for these women to sustain in these times of crisis.

The CIRC Ghazipur team is doing a commendable job as their women entrepreneurs have turned out to be real change makers as despite the lockdown, to help and facilitate the local authorities and healthcare centers in the area, they have started stitching masks. More than 2500 masks have been prepared by them in a month and will continue to do so in this pandemic situation. Through this an alternate livelihood opportunity has also developed for them which has made them confident and more secure.

Simultaneously, local Women of Vizag were trained on how to make masks with minimal resources. However at the same time they were provided with cotton and other material by Digital Empowerment Foundation to reduce their struggle. The purpose of preparing these masks was to generate an alternative livelihood for these women and to support the local administration in their acts to stop COVID-19 by providing these masks on nominal rates to all the local shops so that every person residing in the village should have access to basic sanitation.

DEF's another contribution to fight the COVID-19 situation is visible in its initiative



of producing 1000 Masks whose order has been given to Thotavaripalem vocational tailoring centre which was established by Mr. N. Koteswara Rao by the linkage with NABARD Programme. There are about 40-50 women who got trained in tailoring. Now, out of these 50 women 15 to 20 are engaged in mask making at low cost by getting order from different service providers.

Internet Saathis stitch masks to meet the immediate demand

Under covid-19 support, digital foot soldiers came forward to distribute in our operational area to unreached poor and needy people and gave order to stitch 1000 masks. This vocational tailoring batch is provided at lower than the reasonable market price. This rapport was developed with them as they all have been engaged in our various programmes also trained under livelihood programme entrepreneurship to weavers specially designed for working women. In the present lockdown situation they got work from home.

Internet Saathi Shivkumari Kushwha from Rewa district, Madhya Pradesh, along with her team, is stitching masks for her community members and hospitals.

Sanjay Gandhi Hospital, the largest government hospital in the division, had given Shivkumari an order of making 15,000 masks. Her nine-member team worked tirelessly and finished it within a few days. Another order of 2000 masks was also made for the Gram Panchayat.

While her team is dedicatedly contributing towards overcoming the shortage of masks, they are also taking every possible health precaution to safeguard themselves and their families.

The team wash hands at regular intervals and wear a mask while working. They even sanitise their sewing machines and other tools along with following all government guidelines as a responsible citizen.





Artisan clusters converted to manufacturing hub for masks

Under Digital Cluster Development Program (DCDP) keeping in mind the pandemic, our local team has started working on spreading awareness on corona virus and simultaneously meeting the need of masks. In this regard DCDP Barpali first started it with 15 community members by providing raw materials and wages. Till now they have produced more than 5000 masks and distributing it to community members for free or at minimal cost. Now, local health centres, medical shops and municipality are reaching out to them to supply the same. Similarly model is replicated in Nuaptna and Musiri clusters.

“Essential items have become costlier. Now, getting food is becoming difficult because there is no work or earning,” said Mohammed Shiraj Ansari from Saidanpur cluster of Barabanki in Uttar Pradesh who is one of the many weavers who earn a living through daily wages. Barabanki has around 50,000 weavers and about 20,000 looms. The weavers here earn ₹ 100-120 daily which is even less than the national daily wage average. Moreover, due to the lockdown, the new orders are put on hold and the weavers haven’t received past payments as the delivery of the existing orders could not be made. This goes for clusters across India.

The weavers of Saidanpur are particularly involved in making cotton sarees or gamchcha. Ansari spends eight hours a day working on the loom, producing about



eight pieces of gamchcha, which are then sold for ₹ 50-60 per four pieces. Most of the gamchcha producers are weaving for middlemen or selling their products directly in the local market. Either way, the profit margin is thin.

The covid-19 pandemic has adversely affected the weaver community since there is no relief package announced by the government for them. Also, the next generation of these families are mostly migrant workers who have not been able return leaving the elders without any help in this crisis.

Saidanpur under the project Baank-e-Loom is one of the several clusters that DEF has been working in under the Digital Cluster Development Program (DCDP). DEF has developed a Covid-19 Digital emergency Relief model to provide immediate help to the vulnerable communities like them across 600+ locations in India. This includes directing men and women towards alternate livelihood opportunities like producing essential covid-19 commodities such as masks and sanitisers.

Digikargha, an offshoot of the DCDP programme, has placed an order to Ansari to produce 20 indigo sarees worth five to six thousand and the payment has been made in advance to help his family sustain.

Furthermore, over 600 masks have been distributed and nearly 1500 individuals have been reached by spreading awareness around covid-19 and encouraging preventive health measures, producing masks and access to government entitlements.

Similarly, production of masks has been initiated in Barapali cluster in Odisha which not only caters to the immediate demand in local health centers and frontline workers but also generates a livelihood opportunity without having to step out. Women in Chanderi, Madhya Pradesh, have set themselves up on the task of making masks out of vegetable bags, because of the dire shortage of raw materials in the market to create them.

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected lives of everyone at large. The social, institutional and governance settings have been affected across globe generating unparalleled health crisis and threatening health systems and services. Everyone is confined to their respective homes with only one idea in mind i.e. to stay safe and quarantined.







Other Immediate Relief Measures

The confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Andhra Pradesh are 1097. Whereas in the Prakasam district the number of infected persons has rose to 50. Though the state government is working towards allowing the functioning of the industrial units, however the poor is still struggling to get the basic essential items such as vegetables, masks, hand-wash soaps etc. due to no income generation. Our CIRC Chirala team led by Project Officer Sunil Babu; Centre Coordinator Srinivas and Spoke Coordinator Koteswar Rao after attaining this information through various Local WhatsApp groups acted as Digital Warriors and distributed vegetables to around 300 families at Ambedkar Nagar in Thotavaripalem, Chirala Mandal. So far, they have distributed vegetables to nearly 300 vulnerable families, rice kits distributed to 250 weavers' families, regularly distributes masks to various sections like VRO, VRA, and panchayat people, gram volunteers, Police and frontline workers.

They didn't stop here and started fulfilling another important requirement to fight coronavirus i.e. distribution of handmade cloth masks and sanitizers to the Police department, MPDO, Syndicate Bank Manager and Staff, Grama Panchayat Secretaries, Grama Sachivalaya Staff, Paramedical Staff, Asha workers, Grama Panchayat Volunteers and also to the locals of the village especially the senior citizens and the children as they are prone to this deadly virus. While distributing they explained the 5 steps of handwashing to the children and how hand-sanitizers should be used. These were primarily distributed in the red zone areas and more than 150 community members have been covered.

Similarly, CIRC Kanchipuram team got information a significant number of migrant workers from Odisha are stuck due to the lockdown and are in need of assistance. When our Project officer Balaji visited them despite restrictions, he came to know these workers were employed in tile making industry. Since the production as well as the sales of the tiles has been put on hold these people became jobless. Realising that they are in dire need of basic necessities, dry ration was distributed to 40 people and further



helped them to get in touch with Odisha government where the officer in-charge assured assistance immediately. The team also shared the Dos and Don'ts with the migrant workers to fight corona virus. They were emphasising on going back to their home in Odisha to which our PO explained that railway services have been put on hold and movement is not possible, so it is better to stay at home and be safe.

Covid-19 relief by mapping and identifying

DEF's Bhimapur team in Uttar Pradesh worked on identifying pockets and mapping the areas to find families and individuals who do not have ration cards and are in urgent need. With the help of the local administration, they prepared a kit which included dry ration to help the families sustain for at least a month along with masks, sanitisers and leaflets with measures for preventive healthcare to avoid corona virus. Further, they also surveyed to identify people who are either not linked with any government entitlement or have not received the benefit yet to provide the same.

Hunger is one of the major concerns especially in rural India. People are much fearful of dying of hunger rather than the deadly coronavirus. Our CIRC centers have been identifying and providing food to the vulnerable sections of the society. Also, they are ensuring that community members avail the ration under Garib Kalyan Yojana.



Digital services on the wheels

Under Digital Emergency Relief Program, Smartpur project team in Haryana, has been working tirelessly to provide basic essentials and government entitlements to all those in need because of the Covid-19 situation. During this time of lockdown the reach by the Smartpur team to the locals of the community, especially the target beneficiaries, is next to impossible. However, Smartpur Digital Service Delivery Van is doing the round in order to help those in need. They have been generating awareness in surrounding villages of the Mewat region by distributing masks not and also providing ration to the needy.



Kanchipuram team in action

The CIRC team of Kanchipuram is supporting the communities through digital means by providing services and information related to Covid-19 in various regional language along with basic essential items and tele-health consultancy. The team has been working relentlessly towards generating awareness on Covid-19 especially on health.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=jfKKVGs_b8s&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR068a_ll8HRvOsMIU3EC7EYbuis-vYTJ5CzQsU0H0VCGJKztCt6jBTx4U



Community Radio helps reach last mile

Radio is one of the most effective medium for first mile connectivity. The community radio in Wanaparthy at DEF's digital center has been spreading awareness on Corona Virus. Awaaz Wanaparthy Radio is run by an all women team associated with Vanitha Jyothi Mahila Sangam. Their digital center facilitates the station to carry out feedback mechanism by uploading their shows online. This helps them reach a wider audience and also help resolve queries especially in times of the corona virus pandemic. Telangana State Agriculture minister also sent out a message through the station on Janata Curfew and appealed to stay home.



Curbing misinformation and fake news around Covid-19

An awareness program on Corona Virus was held at Kuruvimalai, Tamil Nadu, on March 14, 2020 under the Health pillar. Twenty Seven people were in attendance and was conducted by Roselin, the resource person for this program. The reason for conducting awareness camp was to ensure that correct information about corona virus is spread and to generate awareness about preventing health measures. Due to a lot of misinformation available on Social Media and the other platforms, the need for right information to reach the community is a must to prevent any kind of panic situation. The resource person talked in detail about Corona Virus and covered topics like what is corona virus, it's symptoms, prevention and most importantly the correct procedure to wash hands to avoid the spread of the virus.



Digital centers acts as relief hubs

The government announced that ration kits will be provided to daily wage laborers. To help speed up the process our co-ordinator Gurudev Singh in Alwar, Rajasthan, along with Ward councilor immediately conducted a survey to prepare a list of those who are in dire need of these benefits. He created a kit which includes 500gms cooking oil, 500gm lentils, 5kg wheat and 1 kg rice which is being distributed. Similarly, our co-ordinators in Haryana and Bihar have created a task force who have got permission from the district collector to help with community outreach, mobilisation & distribution of necessary items.



Immediate relief to migrant workers

The adverse and wholesome impact of Covid-19 is yet to be measured, in this entire catastrophic scenario, the poor, vulnerable, low social and low income groups and informal sectors in India are the worst affected in multitude ways. With reverse migration of workers from cities, this has added to the challenge. Jan Sahas, a non-profit organisation, is ensuring the safety of those who have supported us in our day-to-day activities by tracking who are then identified. With the help of the local authorities and non-profits then they are provided immediate help in terms of food, shelter and health services.

DEF has been able to reach out to 150,000+ migrant workers through a toll free helpline number. To deliver services, the Digital Volunteer force undertook a range of activities to reach out to the communities and the migrant workers/labourers- meeting with local community (keeping in mind the protocol of social distancing) for creating awareness on social security, interacting with migrant workers/labourers on their way back home, meetings with stakeholders in local administration to support them in providing relief measures to the vulnerable groups.



Hungry, Broken, Bruised, Disappointed

“Ab hamein ghar jana hai, hum bohot ruk liye” (We want to go back home now. We have waited long enough), said Bharat Yadav, who was one of the many migrant workers walking back home because of no work and desperation. We met them on the way to Nuh, Haryana, a small town just 80 kilometers from Delhi.

Digital Empowerment Foundation’s team in Nuh works closely with the community through the Community Information Resource Center to cater to the various digital needs. In the time of Covid-19, they have been producing masks which we went to collect to distribute to those in need in Delhi. The DEF Nuh team gave the order to make masks to a local family to help them generate some income in this health crisis. It was on the way that we met the migrant workers who were taking this nearly impossible journey to reach home- some on cycles, rickshaws and others on foot. The Nuh team has been camping at the KMP Expressway where most of the migrants are passing through to go back home, to provide them with relief kits which includes masks, soaps, milk, Glucon-D, biscuits and a water bottle along with cooked food to help them sustain through their journey.



Publications

Covid-19 DEF Dialogues

Covid-19 DEF Dialogue is a special series initiated by Digital Empowerment Foundation where the Founder & Director Osama Manzar connects with key individuals within the DEF network in 600 locations across 25 states. The interaction will help find out how COVID-19 and the lockdown situation has impacted their areas along with the measures being undertaken to tackle it. Watch here: <https://www.defindia.org/project/covid-19-def-dialogues/>

Roti, Kapda, Makan or Internet?

Through this short survey covering 14 states and 51 rural and underserved districts, 16098 respondents were asked to rank Roti, Kapda, Makan, Employment, Mobile, and Internet in the order of their preference. Interestingly, within only first preference ordering, Internet has wedged its way right after Food, followed by Employment, House, Clothing, and Mobile with nearly 70% of the respondents ranking Internet as their first preference being below 30 years of age. Read the full report here: <https://www.defindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Roti-Kapda-Makan-Ya-Internet.pdf>

Pradhan Mantri Free Talktime Yojana

DEF's survey pointed out that internet is the second most important thing after food in rural India. This was again substantiated when thousands of stranded migrant workers made SOS calls for their mobiles to be recharged amid the Covid-19 pandemic. We urge PMO India to consider announcing #FreeTalktimeInternet for the needy in these difficult times and ensure connectivity as a basic human right. Read the full report here: <https://bit.ly/2yRT0RI>

Survey finds food shortage and scarce access to medical care in rural India

US India Policy Institute (USIPI) with DEF, have jointly instituted a social survey of opinions on how Indians are coping during the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic and the lockdown. DEF administered the online survey through its network 600-plus Digital Centers spread across India but mainly concentrated in rural towns and villages. The majority of the 4,857 respondents are from the states of Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, and Telangana. Read full report here: <http://www.usipi.org/2020/04/def-usipi-survey-finds-food-shortage-and-scarce-access-to-medical-care-in-rural-areas/>

The negative impact of lockdown in rural India

DEF has been working on the ground through their 10,000 digital foot soldiers in 600 locations across 130 districts in India. DEF has been conducting several surveys across the country since the start of the country-wide lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This is a survey highlights the issues faced by the people in rural regions due to the lockdown. The survey was conducted across six states in the Hindi belt: Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan and 741 people took part in this survey. Read the full report here: https://www.defindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Survey-Report_Negative-impact-of-lockdown1.pdf

Chronology of misinformation, rumours & fakenews: DEF's on-ground survey report

Digital Empowerment Foundation conducted a survey across 15 states of India namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal which saw about 378 respondents. Qualitative methodology was used for the purpose of conducting the survey and analysing the survey results. Read the full report here:



Snapshot of relief initiatives

- Digital Emergency Relief program: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9HGcnIYen9c>
- Smartpur Team Helps a Migrant: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_mjwL2LJ2cQ
- Defeat Coronavirus—Song by Folk Musician, Yusuf Khan: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4Lb1iQPTnU>
- DIY—Mask Making: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_V3MPQMDSC4
- DEF's Smartpur Team in Nuh Responds to Covid-19 Crisis: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHUbNhnWbeM>
- Banking Correspondent Helps Harassed Woman: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXdvyc6WIHY&t=5s>
- Covid-19 Crisis: SooknaPreneur Kiran Helps the Elderly and Disabled: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xK9uC__NAZs
- Damyanti Kushwaha Makes 3,000 Masks: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IjQ_U2AdejU
- Nazmeen Makes Masks from Shopping Bags: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PS95zRrCswc>
- Internet Saathi Shanu Singh Has a Message in Covid-19 Crisis: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJbQ3xXUyf8&t=7s>
- Internet Saathi Pooja Malviya Make Masks in Covid-19 Crisis: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBgEE6EGCu0>
- ProtoVillage Helps Community in Covid-19 Crisis: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUSrPybGK3E>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4Lb1iQPTnU>









Digital Emergency Relief Program
DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT *foundation*

