

## Indian Dreams Foundation: Covid Relief Report 2021

Covid 19 dealt a hard blow to the Indian economy, which was already struggling with a prolonged slowdown. Partial and complete lockdowns across cities lead to a sharp fall in both formal and informal employment. More than 45% households in the country reported an income drop over the previous year.<sup>1</sup> Daily wage workers and urban poor were the worst affected with little financial security and no assurance of where the next meal would come from. At the same time strict restrictions were imposed on the movement of buses, trains, and other public transport. mass media and social media was covered with heart breaking images of families of daily wage workers and migrant workers trying to reach their native villages where they may at last see some security. However, for many this journey back to their native villages was an impossible task, even as they faced immense financial distress and hunger.

In Agra too several families of daily wage workers were affected owing to the local industry coming to a standstill. Many households coped by decreasing their food intake. The Indian Dreams Foundation (IDF) has for years been working with slum dwelling communities and had their ears close to the ground and was swift to respond to this humanitarian crisis. Through its outreach programmes, the IDF reached over 3,500 families across 3 districts in Uttar Pradesh.

### Dry Ration Support Initiative

To address the immediate issue of hunger and malnutrition arising out of income depletion, the IDF distributed dry ration kits to affected families across 12 J&J communities in Agra.



Nutrition kits focused on families with young children and seniors residing without any support was created and initially distributed to 700 families.

IDF also launched a helpline, where other affected families could call in to seek support for rations and same day support could be provided to them. Over the course of the initiative, IDF was able to provide nutrition kits to more than 3,500 families and saved 22,000 persons from extreme hunger.



Through other ongoing programmes like “Honhar Ladki”, “Smile Days” and “Ready to school”, the IDF team is deeply entrenched within these J&J communities in Agra. Through regular visits to the served families, they maintained a check on the health and well-being of the families and if nutritional requirements were being met.

### Hygiene Workshops and Sanitation kits

Many a times “Social Distancing” is not an option for families living in J&J cluster. The lack or limitation of sanitation infrastructure means that habits like frequent hand washing and social distancing are in fact difficult to practice. This puts families residing in J&J clusters at a high risk of COVID infections. When coupled with the lack of information about medication, available hospital beds, isolation centres, the results could be catastrophic.

The IDF conducted 60 workshops in Agra, Barabanki and Rae Bareli to spread awareness about COVID 19, best practices to follow, Symptom, available government schemes for medication, nearest available isolation centres and health centres. These workshops were a window to obtain information, seek clarifications and allay fears for women of the communities who have minimal access to technology and information.

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More than 700 sanitation and hygiene kits containing essentials like reusable face masks, hand sanitizers, Antiseptic surface cleaners, soaps, toothpaste, brush and Dettol were also distributed to women participating in these workshops.



### Cash Grant Support for selected families

During the first wave of COVID in 2020, the IDF provided cash grant support to 154 families of daily wage workers who were suffering immense financial difficulties. The cash grant was provided with the support of GiveIndia Foundation, Mumbai. The IDF team helped the beneficiary families manage their daily expenses during the period of the complete nationwide lockdown.

### Women Connect Initiative

Impact of crises are hardly ever gender neutral, COVID 19 is no exception. A lesser discussed aspect of the pandemic has been the impact that it has had on women's health and physical safety.

During the first 4 phases of the lockdown, a higher number of domestic violence complaints were filed by women than in any 10 preceding years.<sup>2</sup> The lack of economic activity, school or any connect outside of home, has increased the risk of exploitation and abuse at home. Moreover, the lockdown made women's access to sexual and reproductive health services more difficult.

The IDF had been working with women of the community on SRHR and had launched a helpline for women to seek intervention and support. During the COVID 19 pandemic received over 200 enquiries for SRH rights, MHM and GBV related issues. IDF also conducted workshops for information dissemination on SRH rights and Menstrual Hygiene Management. As incomes were destroyed, many women in lost their financial agency. IDF supported these women with access to medical help, contraception, and sanitary napkins.



IDF distributed over 5,000 hygiene kits, and 40,000 sanitary napkins to adolescent girls and underserved women during this period. 50 health advocates (change agents) were trained from within the communities to reach out to every household and spread awareness about SRH rights and MHM. The IDF team's efforts also saved the future of 10 young girls, who were being forced into early child marriage. The team efforts via the "Smile days" and "Honhar Ladki" programmes continue to impact the lives of many young women and girls from the underserved communities, by reducing school dropouts and enabling young girls to continue their education.

### References:

1. Research center for Policy. "[Podcast: How has India's lockdown impacted unemployment rates and income levels?](#)". Retrieved 24 April 2020.
2. Vignesh Radhakrishnan, Suman Sen and Naresh Sigaravelu <https://www.thehindu.com/data/data-domestic-violence-complaints-at-a-10-year-high-during-covid-19-lockdown/article31885001.ece>.