



SAMARPAN

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INDEX

- **Foreword**
- **Acknowledgements**
- **About Us**
- **Previous work experience in crisis management**
- **The Corona crises and its after-effects**
- **To stay or to leave: The conundrum that cost lives**
- **How COVID-19 is a great threat to children?**
- **Areas Covered:**
 - Delhi
 - Uttar Pradesh & Madhya Pradesh
- **Remedies that we adopted**
 - Awareness Initiative
 - Food Initiative
 - Hygiene Initiatives
 - Education Initiative
 - Mental Health Initiatives
- **Recommendations for post lockdown phase**
- **Impact of COVID-19 on NGOs**
- **Media Report**
- **Support Us**
- **Conclusion**
- **Our Achievements**
- **Photo Gallery**

Foreword

This report highlights the steps taken by PARAS INDIA through its initiative “Samarpan” ever since the COVID-19 lockdown began. The report also brings into notice the plight of the migrant workers and their families. It is an effort in the direction to suggest suitable methods that could be adopted to provide relief measures in a holistic manner.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our donors for their support that enabled food supplies to the workers in need. We acknowledge individuals, civil society organisations and volunteers who responded to our requests to provide essential services to the stranded workers. We also wish to acknowledge officials who responded to requests for help with readiness. We would also like to thank workers who shared their stories with us.

About Us

Providing Actions With Research And Sustainable Development

PARAS INDIA was established in 2007 with the aim to transform society by uplifting and dignifying the marginalized sections of the society. With our efforts, we aim to empower the society in line with

the tenets enshrined in our Constitution. We are a national level non-governmental organization which is currently working in four states in India, namely, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Delhi-NCR. Our focus areas include education, gender, counselling, awareness generation, livelihood, healthcare and disaster management.



Previous work experience in crisis management

Working in flood-affected areas in Bahraich district of Uttar Pradesh

Organized health camp in flood-affected areas, Bahraich district Uttar Pradesh in the year 2007. In consultation with the practising doctors, we provided primary health care to the people and distributed prescribed medicines free of cost.



Kerala floods

The 2018 floods in Kerala had caused heavy loss of life and property. The calamities and its aftermath have made us realise that we are at the mercy of nature. PARAS India had launched a campaign to assist in Relief Operations. It arranged a Donation Camp in Delhi and its surrounding areas for over a week where people from local communities contributed through giving clothes, money and medicines. Volunteers collected the items on the basis of a list issued by the Kerala government and finally got a very good response. The NGO submitted clothes, medicines etc to the Kerala House in Connaught Place in New Delhi and sent financial help collected through the campaign to Kerala Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund.



Regularly working in collaboration with DDMA in Delhi

We have regularly conducted mock drills in Delhi-NCR for awareness on disaster management in coordination with DDMA. For the past 10 years, we have in collaboration with DDMA, running our Project Suraksha regarding preventive and mitigation measures to be taken during earthquakes, urban flooding and fires.





रहास बहाये।
जन कराय ॥
संगीत वितरण
नई दिल्ली

TRIKOR
कपूर थारु

The Corona crises and its after-effects

The COVID-19 lockdown has led to a “triple crisis”, the crisis of health, social and economic management. The social crisis unfolded itself with the way the lockdown left more than 140 million workers from the informal economy unemployed. Resultantly, the excruciating pain the migrants had to suffer due to displacement, having to travel hundreds of kilometres on foot without adequate arrangements of food and water. Several were reported to be killed in accidents.

The ongoing crisis of economic hardship and lack of access to health care for non-COVID patients is visible in daily lives. The ground realities tell us that the poorest Indians are undocumented with no ration cards. This could lead to real possibilities of kicking-off starvation. The psychological sense of displacement and leaving behind the only source of income has led to mental stress, anxiety and depression among many. The city in which they had built homes for people to reside can't even provide them with two meals a day. They felt no sense of belonging in the city. In the village, community life gives them hope for life.

The series of incidents mentioned have brought a question into the light- Why had the migrants moved to cities? The answer as we all know is to find work opportunities and earn a living. The other side of the answer highlights that today we are left with more people and fewer resources in the villages. With no resources in the villages, the poor will keep getting poorer. As a result, the debts and hunger crisis will increase in the coming days.

To stay or to leave: The conundrum that cost lives

After the lockdown was announced, we spoke to many workers who could not leave. They wanted to stay back as they were willing to continue to work even during the lockdown. Many have had no income for the entire period of lockdown. Even among those who have received some payment, there is widespread concern among the workers that this would be deducted from their salary once lockdown ends. Moreover, for most of the daily wage factory/construction workers, their wages for the time they have worked have not been paid yet so they have to stay back till these dues are cleared. They had no money left to return.

How COVID-19 is a great threat to children?

As per a report by UNFPA, 13 million extra child marriages are predicted worldwide and will occur in the years immediately following the crises, with at least 4 million more girls married in the next two years. Schools, in particular, can be an essential lifeline and protective environment for girls and boys. Teachers are often the first point of contact for children experiencing violence and they can report or make referrals to child protection systems. With schools closed, many of the children most at risk of experiencing violence will also not have access to the technology needed to stay connected with teachers, friends and extended family.

An insecure life, physical and sexual abuse by adults in their immediate communities, harassment by law enforcing agencies, inadequate or no access to education and healthcare facilities are some of the issues that child labourers would face.

This will undo the years of development interventions that had yielded good results.

Areas Covered

Our basic strategy was to cover the source where the communities were stranded during the lockdown. We also targeted the transit points like highways where the migrant workers were moving on foot with their families. Once these communities reached their villages, i.e., the destination, we are currently looking for ways to help them in various possible ways. We covered the following states-

DELHI

Among all states, Delhi has the highest share of inter-state migrants in its total population. This makes relief work all the more daunting. We extensively covered various parts of Delhi. We especially focussed our efforts towards the most marginalised, like construction workers, women who work as domestic staff, daily wage earners like rickshaw pullers, beggars, physically disabled and the slum communities.



UTTAR PRADESH & MADHYA PRADESH

Among the states, UP has said 21.69 lakh workers had returned, and UP itself had sent back 1.35 lakh during the pandemic. For the first few weeks after lockdown, the highways were filled with people walking even during morning hours. The families included young children and pregnant women among them who did not have adequate food and water to survive during the scorching heat.

We covered the tribal communities and remote rural areas in the villages, in U.P. and M.P.



Remedies that we adopted

More than 140 million migrant workers have lost jobs since the lockdown began and now face destitution. The lockdown has not only left the poor without food but is robbing their dignity too. Samarpan-COVID 19 is an initiative by PARAS INDIA to extend helping hands to the most vulnerable during the CoronaVirus pandemic. Under Samarpan, we are trying to reach the unreached, the migrant workers that are stuck in the metropolitan, the construction workers, pregnant women, daily wage earners and the beggars. We are giving them a reason to survive. The ones who have lost their income in the lockdown have no food and wages and need our assistance. We have extensively covered locations in various districts of Delhi.

Awareness Initiative

We have been communicating the necessary steps and preventive measures to be taken using social media platforms. We have set communication channels to share information quickly. Our community workers disseminated information regarding safety and quarantine rules in the native language. Our coordinators are sharing informational videos in English and Hindi to the communities on how to wear masks, correct methods of disposing of the masks, right technique for hand washing etc. Our community workers also made posters, pamphlets, wall-hangings and wall-paintings to dismantle fake news and provide them with the right information at this crucial time.



पारस इंडिया



PARAS INDIA
NGO For Employment

(Providing Actions With Research and Sustainable Development)

कार्यक्षेत्र:- दिल्ली, उत्तर प्रदेश, मध्य प्रदेश व छत्तीसगढ़

- जानसमझता** - बेरोजगार लोगों को उनके अधिकार (सबसे सरकारी योजनाओं की जानकारी देना) देकर जोड़ना।
- शिक्षा** - स्कूल में जाने वाले व हाथ जोड़ने वाले (विशेष रूप से अल्पसंख्यकों व स्त्रियों) को अवैधानुसार शिक्षा प्रदान करना तथा उन्हें मुक्तपत्रा देना। वर्षों व समुदाय में वैज्ञानिक सोच को विकसित करना।
- स्वास्थ्य** - स्वास्थ्य के प्रति समुदाय को जागरूक करना व स्वास्थ्य विचार का आगोश बनना।
- आजीविका** - समुदाय में प्रशिक्षण के माध्यम से कौशल बढ़ाना वृद्धि करना।
- परामर्श** - बेरोजगार पत्रकारों व कोषिण प्रदान करना तथा बेरोजगारों को कानूनी सहायता व सल्लाह देना।
- आपदा प्रबंधन** - आपदा प्रबंधन के तहत लोगों को जागरूक, प्रशिक्षित व सज्ज करना।
- वैश्विक समझता** - समाज को वैश्विक समझता के प्रति जागरूक करना।



पारस इंडिया - दिल्ली



Food Initiatives

Provided immediate relief to people in the form of food packets

We provided food to migrant workers and labours as they were trying to return to hometowns and villages in other states to fight hunger due to coronavirus. We also reached out to communities that were stranded back in the cities with no wages. Our frontline workers arranged for e-passes to reach out to our food packing centres. We sourced, packed and distributed food packets using a mobile food van extensively covering locations where help was sought. We maintained social distancing throughout the chain from sourcing to distribution.



Included stray animals and birds in our food distribution drive

With restaurants and eateries downing shutters and food trucks parked at homes, strays have been struggling to find food to kill their hunger. The scarcity of food and water may lead to aggressive tendencies among the strays. Ever since the lockdown, we have been feeding stray animals including monkeys and cows.





Hygiene Initiatives

Produced face masks



A group of women associated with PARAS are pooling their tailoring skills and setting their sewing machines working to produce thousands of face masks that can help to slow the spread of COVID-19. The women associated with our Silai school programs were given training and guidance on how to sew face masks as per the guidelines of the MoHFW. The masks were produced keeping utmost hygiene standards. Their effort will help protect residents of the communities. And with the economy under additional strain from the pandemic, the work is also a source of income for these women. These women had all previously received livelihoods skills training through projects like Saksham, Parivartan and Usha Silai Schools aimed at supporting vulnerable women to generate income.

Distributed sanitizers for safety from coronavirus

The communities where we work generally have a shortage of adequate water and hygiene. They are provided with water through water trucks that demand to queue up. Given the circumstances, we distributed sanitizers among the communities to keep themselves safe from the virus.



Sanitary napkins distribution

UNICEF has said "Periods don't stop for pandemics – it's every girl's right to manage her period safely and with dignity." Menstrual hygiene is an under-discussed topic, especially at the household and community level. Some cultural and religious norms are associated with menstruation, some of which include not allowing menstruating women and girls to partake in certain activities and not permitting them to prepare some kinds of foods. This added to lockdown and economic disruptions have led to women and girls losing access to hygiene products. We sourced and distributed sanitary napkins to women from the underprivileged community.



Face masks distribution

The most effective weapon against the fight of COVID-19 has been said to be the face masks. However, in the underprivileged communities either due to lack of awareness or lack of resources people are not using masks effectively. We distributed face masks made by women from the silai centres and additionally sourced them from the market to cover as many people as we could. We provided masks to old age women and children along with information on how to use them effectively and disperse them safely.



Slippers distribution

For the migrant workers and their families including children forced to walk barefooted in the scorching summer because of poverty, we distributed slippers. There have been several instances of children walking barefooted with blisters on foot after their slippers were either torn or got damaged while walking long distances on roads due to non-availability of transport during the lockdown.



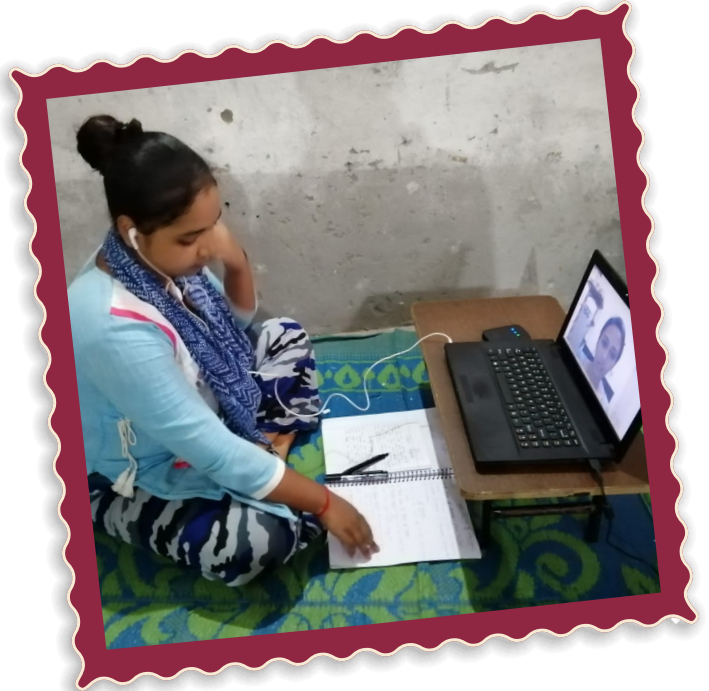


Education Initiatives

Started LEAD program

We know things are changing due to the pandemic of CoronaVirus in the current times. We have adapted to the changing circumstances and evolved our learning methods accordingly. We are connecting the children/learner with interested qualified/ skilled individuals/Mentor/volunteers via digital means (laptops, phones, whats app video/ voice call, etc.) to understand the learner's aptitude so as to improve his/her communication skills in the English Language.

Considering every learner as a kid howsoever he/she is aged, we aim to help them to improve their English communication skills from the start. Here, we are focusing on the first level, i.e. Basics/ Fundamentals under the "LEAD Program" that is part of our inclusive "Communicative English" program. It's a 20 Hours program divided into five modules. We have provided these volunteers with a curriculum to follow. Simultaneously, we are regularly taking their feedback for evaluation and assessment of their learners' performance and to improve the program.



Enabling education continuity for all students associated with PARAS



The COVID-19 outbreak has slowed down or even halted essential national activities, both economic and social and even schooling. However, thanks to technology, innovative ways are seeing light especially when it comes to teaching, in order to make sure that students can keep on learning while in quarantine or out of school. As classes are gradually shifting to the online medium during the lockdown, PARAS is devising strategies to adapt to these changes. To allow children to keep up with the national classroom curriculum, the teachers and coordinators are putting in extra efforts to build course content according to the knowledge level of all the students associated with PARAS. The teachers are in regular contact with the students and guiding them in their studies. Subjects like English and Science are focussed upon.

Online teaching is a great alternative to provide minimum service to students who are currently quarantined due to COVID-19. Students who do not have smartphones and internet facilities are being mentored over normal voice calls. The organization is also stressing upon the need for capacity building to help the teachers in this new setup.

Mental Health Initiatives

During this time, when everybody is undergoing stress and anxiety for various reasons, we are conducting mental health sessions targeting from children to women to youth. We also conducted a mental health workshop for our staff to keep them fit while they are working in the pandemic taking utmost risks. We have organised counselling sessions with experts that included art and craft workshops with adolescent students.



Impact of COVID-19 on NGOs

With such a large scale pandemic that India has never experienced before, what came out of it was the growing recognition that NGOs can respond to a pandemic and are willing to take the risk. The COVID-19 led to a suspension of the regular programs at many NGOs that have societal implications. The shifting of the workplace from offices to homes and lack of digital means affected beneficiaries of the projects that were running earlier. Moreover, the funding to the regular programs was shifted towards providing relief material for COVID-19. The issue that COVID-19 funding doesn't cover operation cost has led to putting money from their own pocket.

Recommendations for post lockdown phase

Based on the ordeal of thousands of workers and their families returning we have come up with suggestions to make lives easier in the coming year.

1 Shifting our focus to the villages

We have to think of the ways in which we can rebuild rural society. It is high time that we start valuing farmers more than the food in our plates. People who have gone to the villages must be given employment opportunities there. This calls for investing judiciously in the village economy. We have to keep in mind that no cash crops have ever made farmers cash-rich, therefore, we need to revamp the way we look at food. The focus should be on growing pulses instead of coffee keeping in mind food security. Therefore, NGOs and state institutions have to take appropriate measures for development interventions in the villages.

2 Advocating for a robust public health system:

India's public health expenditure for the financial year 2019-20 was just 1.29% of the GDP. The pandemic has shown that we need to invest heavily in improving the infrastructure, manpower, technology, increased penetration, quality control and research in the field of health.

3 Strengthening cybersecurity

With workplaces shifting to homes and offices are being shut, it is the need of the hour to strengthen cybersecurity and stop cyber crimes. More so because online education demands that we save our children from online harassment and mishaps.

4 Empowering children through educational interventions

With workplaces shifting to homes and offices are being shut, it is the need of the hour to strengthen cybersecurity and stop cyber crimes. More so because online education demands that we save our children from online harassment and mishaps.

5 Ensure the availability of, and facilitate access to mental health and psychosocial support services

for children and parents or caregivers who are a risk or have experienced hardships. This may also include remote counselling options or community outreach programmes.



Support Us

COVID-19 crisis is unlike any other crisis that has rampaged the entire country in a single blow. This has led to immediate fund demands in the whole country in a single go. We need immediate financial assistance to help survive the needy.

Conclusion

It is said that India resides in its villages. In a country like ours, with the world's largest rural population, and around 260 million rural poor residing in its villages, having a separate room for spending 14-days is a luxury only a few can afford. Moreover, the community life that the people from villages live includes shared social and cultural practices. For example, there are shared bathrooms, wells and hand pumps that many families use. How would the virus be contained in such a scenario? It is, therefore, the need of the hour to understand ground realities and devise strategies accordingly.

In what is said to be the largest reverse migration that has taken place in the history of India after partition, it is important to support people so that they do not return back to the cities in the same distress that they had come from. This is possible only when civil society and state work in tandem with each other to provide food and nutrition security, regular and transparent communication in a simple language, educational and health interventions.

It is time that we take the NGO as an expert institution in itself instead of taking them as a beneficiary of the government.

Our Achievements

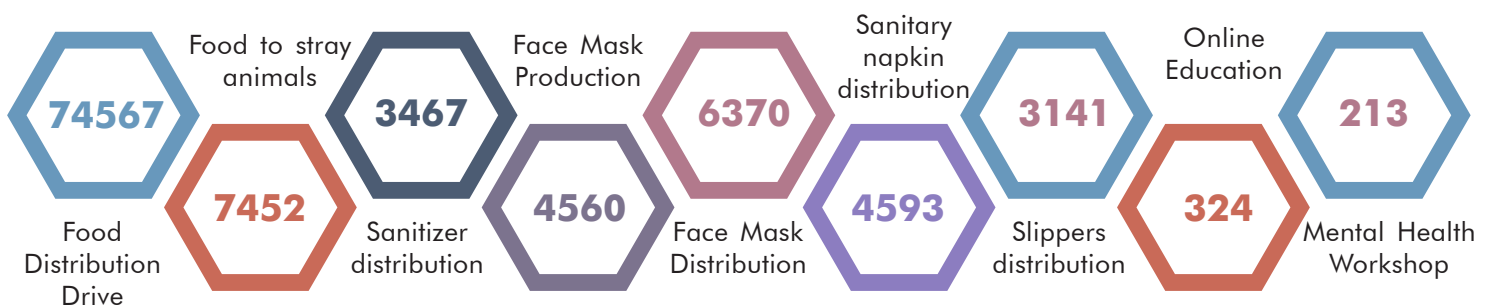


Photo Gallery





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