Providing relief and support to persons with disabilities affected by the COVID 19 Lockdown

A Report
Introduction

COVID 19 has brought unprecedented discomfort and woes in its wake, where the most vulnerable have been the most excluded, exploited and isolated. While we hear myriad stories of the migrants and people with comorbidities suffering during this lockdown, the one group that continues to remain invisible to all is people with disabilities – a population that cuts across all others regardless of gender, age, religion, geography or economic background.

The Indian Government on 24th March 2020 announced a 21 day lockdown to combat the spread of the coronavirus. With just a 4 hour notice the announcement caught everyone off guards with people struggling to prepare themselves for the lockdown. One group that was unable to prepare themselves was people with disabilities across India who had much larger needs and fewer resources. The wrath of Covid19 ranged from loss of jobs, disruption in sources of income, eventually leading to dearth of basic essentials such as food and shelter and medicines Their other needs – access to attendants, to healthcare, inability to maintain physical distancing, lack on any information or updates- each typical to the individual need of a person, were also impacted.

National Centre for Promotion of Employment People (NCPEDP), India’s leading cross disability advocacy organisation announced a helpline to provide support to people with disabilities impacted by the lockdown. The purpose of the helpline was three fold: to understand key issues faced by people with disabilities, to resolve the issues by liaising with appropriate Government authorities directly or through our partners and providing direct relief and support wherever required. The last intervention was resultant of the many desperate calls we received from people directly or from organisations and institutions working with them and were most adversely impacted by the shortage of supplies during the lockdown. Through helplines operated by NCPEDP partners such as iCALL Psychosocial Helpline by TISS, helpline of Eyeway, an organization working for visually impaired people, and Whatsapp group called Heath NGO, distress calls continue to be regularly routed to the NCPEDP helpline and we are extremely grateful to our partner Mphasis who supported our endeavours in providing relief to this very vulnerable and marginalised group of people across 7 states of India.

State-wise Report

A. Geographical locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S No.</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Area/Districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chhattisgarh</td>
<td>Ambikapur, Saraguja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>Northwest Delhi - Mangolpuri, Sultanpuri, Sulaiman Nagar, Kinari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>Yellapur, Uttara Kannada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>Sielmat village, Churachandpur and Noney District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>Ratlam, Khandwa*, Neemuch, Bhind, Burhanpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>Amravati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
<td>Patmada and Boram, East Singhbhum* and Saraikela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Odisha</td>
<td>Khordha district</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


NCPEDP received an urgent SOS call from Anamika Welfare Society, Ambalika, District Saraguja in Chhattisgarh. The organisation runs two hostels for people with disabilities in the region and in the lockdown were stranded with no access to supplies of ration, food, soaps and detergents, sanitisers, sanitary pads etc. Given the increased chance of infection in a hostel the residents also had to be supplied masks and preventive materials. NCPEDP provided 65 relief kits comprising of rice, wheat, oil, spices, sugar, tea, potato, soap, dry food items to residents of the two hostels.

2. Delhi: Viklang Sahara Samiti Delhi

Viklang Sahara Samiti Delhi works for the welfare and betterment of marginalized sections of society, particularly people with disabilities, living in JJ Colony of Delhi. These people were the most impacted by the lockdown as most of them were small vendors, running small businesses like tea stalls and cobbler shops etc. Others survived only on pensions, some of which were limited to those with an 80% disability. Direct fund transfers were also accessed by those that had Jan Dhan Accounts as also was free ration available to those with ration cards. A large number of people living in the JJ colony were unaware of the government benefits and schemes. NCPEDP collaborated with Viklang Sahara Samiti to provide ration kits to 37 families of persons with disabilities, daily wages worker, destitute families, widows and other needy people in the areas of Mangolpuri, Sultanpuri, Sulaiman Nagar, Kinari of Northwest Delhi.

3. Jharkhand: Jharkhand Viklang Manch

Our partners informed us that even 15 days after the lockdown, aid from neither the Central nor State Governments had reached the local people. The primary source of income for most of the people in the East Sighbhum and Saraikela district was production and selling of forest products, vegetables and fruits. The Covid19 lockdown disrupted the supply chain in the absence of all transport leaving the farmers with humongous amount of fruits and vegetables rotting in the fields. Through our partner – the Jharkhand Viklang Manch, we distributed relief kits comprising of items such as mustard oil, pulses, salt, sugar, tea, potato, onion, soaps, spices and other dry food items to 84 families of disabled people in East Singhbhum and 20 families of disabled people in Saraikela.

4. Karnataka: The Association of People with Disability

Siddis are descendants of African Negros, who were brought to India mainly by Arabs, the Portuguese and the Dutch and are found in Karnataka in Uttara Kannada, Dharwad and Belgaum districts, scattered in villages and interior forests, inaccessible to each other even occasionally. Largely landless their source of income is the minor forest products (honey, dalchinni, lavanga, tamarind, pepper, soft wax, etc.) they collect and sell, or through traditional crafts such as basket weaving, preparing bamboo chairs, cots, etc sold at dismal rates due to absence of market facilities. Some also work as daily wagers in the agriculture sector or the construction industry. All these are seasonal in nature and not sustainable, leading to borrow heavily at exorbitant interest rates from local money lenders.

Most of them lost their livelihoods due to the COVID 19. Significantly more impacted were the people with disabilities in the community. Living in forests accessibility was one the key concerns and they were unable to get any government support such as ration, health facilities etc due to lack of transportation facilities. During telephonic discussions with the community leaders we found that the district administration has not reached out to them and the people with disabilities in the community had no access to food and health facilities. NCPEDP collaborated with APD (The Association of People with Disabilities) to distribute 150 ration kits to the families of persons with disabilities in the Siddhi community.

5. Madhya Pradesh: Madhya Pradesh Viklang Manch

NCPEDP and MP Viklang Manch distributed relief kits to destitute people with disabilities in 5 districts of Madhya Pradesh - Ratlam, Khandwa, Neemuch, Bhind and Burhanpur. Inspired by our efforts, Government aided organizations of Khandwa and Ratlam districts also replicated the same with people with disabilities in their districts. People in these districts sustained themselves as daily wage earners finding partial employment under the MNREGA or running their small businesses in tailoring and Stitching (seasonal in nature), as vegetable vendors and sellers of household commodities in local markets etc. The lockdown impacted the very badly. In Khandwa a person, who had acquired partial disability at his workplace could fetch himself just one meal in the entire day. In Ratlam, 1-2 families of disabled people had not eaten for more than 2 days. The Central government ex-gratia of Rs 1000 had yet to be received by them and while state government had disbursed the pension of Rs1200 (Rs600 per month) for two months - March and April, recipients were unable to visit banks to withdraw the money in the lockdown. NCPEDP and Viklang Manch teamed up to deliver rations to 157 families.

6. Maharashtra- Through a local contact at Amravati

NCPEDP was contacted on its helpline by a person with visual impairment who requested help for a group of blind hawkers in Amravati. Post the lockdown, they were facing severe hardships to make their ends meet. Through a local contact at Amravati, NCPEDP collaborated with a ration shop and facilitated the delivery 12 ration kits to disabled people and their families. The ration kit comprised of rice, wheat, oil, spices, sugar, tea, potato, onion, soap, and dry food items.

In Manipur, the rules laid by Central Government are yet to be followed by the state and the districts. Disabled people have little access to employment – most of them are daily wage earners and were most affected by the Covid19 lockdown. The regular practice of dissemination of ration was stopped in some areas. NCPEDP collaborated with 2 local organizations- Disabled Development Association and State Platform of Disabled People’s Organization and distributed relief kits consisting of rice, potato, pulses, salt, oil, spices, dry food items, soap, tea leaves to 75 families of disabled people in the area of Sielmat village, Churachandpur and Noney District.

8. Odisha – Swabhiman (State Disability Information And Resource Center)

The first case of a Covid19 among disabled people in Bhubaneswar was recorded on 02 Apr 2020. Amid the lockdown, our partner Swabhiman conducted a quick survey on the status of disabled people in Odisha since the beginning of the Coronavirus, and based on the status report, it proposed to extend assistance in Khordha district, Astaranga Block (near Puri) and Bhubaneswar slums. The proposed locations were the worst affected by COVID-19 areas in Odisha. These areas are economically and infrastructure wise devastated in 2019 FANI cyclone and have a huge population of disabled people. So poverty is a crucial issue in this region. NCPEDP in collaboration with Swabhiman distributed Ration and Sanitization kit to 100 families(433 individuals) of disabled people in the Khordha district. The kits consisted of Rice, Wheat, Pulses, Oil, Dry food items, Salt, spices, Bath Soap, Detergent Bar, Surf, Mask.

B. Project Outlay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S No.</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Relief kits contents</th>
<th>Cost per kit</th>
<th>Number of Beneficiary Families</th>
<th>Total Cost in INR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chhattisgarh</td>
<td>Rice, wheat, oil, spices, sugar, tea, potato, soap, dry food items</td>
<td>988</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>64220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>Wheat Flour, Rice, Oil, Salt, Condiment, Soup (2 varieties), Pulse, Sugar, Tea Leaf, Colgate</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>27750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
<td>Mustard Oil, Pulses, Salt, Sugar, Tea, Potato, Onion, Soaps, Spices, Dry food items</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>55164*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East Singhbhum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Saraikela</td>
<td>Rice, Atta, Sugar, Tea, Oil, Pulses, Rava, Salt, Soap, Toothpaste</td>
<td>749</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>112350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>Pulses, oil, tea, sugar, spices, soya bean, dry food items</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>78500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>Oil, Pulses, Rice, Wheat, Salt, Sugar, Tea, Potato, Onion, Soaps, Spices, Dry food items</td>
<td>931</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>Rice, potato, pulses, salt, oil, spices, dry food items, soap, tea leaves</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>67725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Odisha</td>
<td>Rice, Wheat, Pulses, Oil, Dry food items, Salt, spices, Bath Soap, Detergent Bar, Surf, Mask</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>500881</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Distribution charges 3000 extra
While we see the lockdown come to an end in the next few days, the struggles and woes of people with disabilities will continue and perhaps worsen as we navigate ourselves through the pandemic induced ‘new normal’. And NCPEDP is gearing up to be able to reach out to more people, with more services and through more partnerships as we look at efforts to rehabilitate and support the most vulnerable of all vulnerable groups – people with disabilities and their families. And we seek your continued support to help us achieve this goal.

C. Stories in Pictures

Distribution in Delhi

Distribution in Karnataka

Distribution in Madhya Pradesh

Distribution in Manipur
**D:Press Coverage**

**Jharkhand**

84 दिव्यांगों के बीच राशन वितरित

अमरपुर, झारखंड विकास मंडल एवं अनुपालन मंडल ने बोयाम क्षेत्र में जरूरतमंदों के बीच राशन वितरित किया, क्षेत्र में 400 दिव्यांगों को वित्तीय आयुक्तियां दी गई थी। इस निकाय में भ्रष्टाचारी, अकूत कुद्रती, क्रूर दिनियों, मद्य बियागी, दमु शारीकी, दोषी जीती, ओष्ठ जीती समेत अन्य मौजूद थे।

**Manipur**

जस्ता रायल िर्षागजिए के बीच राहुल साम्राज्य का वितरण

जस्ता रायल रिएंजमिंट के बीच राहुल साम्राज्य का वितरण

2 मई, 2021: मध्यप्रदेश में जयपुर रायल दिवाली के संबंध में आयोजित एक दिवाली की परम्परा के तहत वितरित किए जा रहे आयुक्तियों को वितरित किया गया।

**Relief works for differently-abled persons continues**

As part of the continuous distribution of essential materials and commodities by the Jharkhand Development Authority (JDA), relief materials are being distributed to differently-abled persons in Jharkhand. The relief materials are distributed through various channels, including local administration, government agencies, and NGOs.

**SPDPO, DDAM distribute relief materials to differently-abled persons**

With the lockdown and curfew being imposed in most states due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the lives of many people have been affected. As a result, the Jharkhand Development Authority (JDA) and other government agencies have been distributing relief materials to differently-abled persons in the state. The relief materials include food items, clothing, and other essentials.

**PWDS suffer during lockdown**

Both state governments and the Jharkhand Development Authority have been providing relief to the differently-abled persons during the lockdown. However, there are still many challenges faced by the differently-abled persons in accessing necessary goods and services.
दिवांगज्ञों को राहत सामग्री का वितरण
संयोग, दैनिक शिखर टाइम्स, धामनोदेह, संध्याकालिक श्रीकांत धामरा

न्याय और न्यायमंत्री ने दिवांगज्ञों को राहत सामग्री का वितरण किया। न्यायमंत्री ने दिवांगज्ञों को मदद की तरह निर्देशित किया जिसे न्याय और न्यायमंत्री ने दिवांगज्ञों को राहत सामग्री का वितरण किया।

दिवांगज्ञों की सहायता के लिए वाल्मिकर्ष का गठन
राजस्थान लोकवाणी के वैकल्य जिले के न्यायमंत्री ने दिवांगज्ञों को काम का गठन किया। न्यायमंत्री ने दिवांगज्ञों की सहायता के लिए वाल्मिकर्ष का गठन किया।

दिवांगज्ञों को राहत सामग्री वितरि के