

No wages No Safety No Food No Empathy The Acche Din for Migrants in Covid's India

A report

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Acknowledgement:

This update is an outcome of the boldness, tireless and diligent perseverance of GALU's team and members of its Sangathans and Mandals. Despite the sudden lockdown, which has created fear, uncertainty, confusion as well as situational hunger among the migrant populations across India.

The utter disarray created by the sudden clamping of so-called Janta curfew, in which the Janta had no hand in decision maker has exposed the callousness and absence of empathy among the decision-makers. The following report exposes the dire vulnerability of the already marginalised tribals, dalits and OBC community who are engaged in the unorganised labour.

GALU wished to express its gratitude to its workers as well as the representatives of the local panchayats as well as leaders who have provided timely assistance and support in ensuring the dignity, safety, health and hunger needs of the people are met in the short run Following is our collective efforts to help the people in distress:

Regards

Paulomee Mistry

Beginning :

It is our firm belief that the 'new normal' will be – so to say – old wine in new bottle. Many of the deep-rooted social fissures and fractured polity in Indian society will further marginalize and ostracise the tribal and dalit communities. The tag of Corona will be added to the existing labels of dalit, muslim and Adivasi.

However, we do also believe that human rights and humane values need to be protected and promoted through a collaborative effort. Small but constructive steps taken by GALU and its team in the past four weeks show the glimmer of hope, solidarity and communitarian efforts to redress the hunger, survival and shelter needs of the migrant labour who are facing excruciating pain, anguish and fear of death.

The following report has some highlights of the work done, and the positive transient impact created through our teams.

Capacity Building of GALU team and preparedness for COVID-19 Pandemic:

- We provided training to all our staff about Covid-19 Pandemic. Special emphasis was given on orientation about the disease, Hand washing /sanitizing hands, good hygiene practices, Social Distancing measures and proper use of mask.
- We have provided personal protective equipment to all our staff. Mask Gloves and sanitizers given.
- Regular communication was done with all the staff members regarding following of safety precautions strictly.
- Special permission was obtained from concerned authorities for necessary field visit during the lockdown.
- All the field workers worked in the specific designated area near to their house and also used phone contacts for faraway places.

- Our main action was to give community awareness about COVID-19 precautions to be taken and immediate needs like food.
- All the leaders in the village were contacted through mass communication system developed by GALU and they were informed to spread awareness about COVID-19 among their communities.
- We used our communication system to contact our team and members through phone/SMS/ Whatsapp and video call with people. To communicate with government we opened our twitter handles on NREGA and Food security.

Activities done during lockdown:

| Activities | Activity Details | Supported | Whom | How many |
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| Support to Migrant workers | As covid 19 has adversely affected migrant population, GALU is providing support to our migrant workers to return home through advocacy with government and by our local contacts. We have contacted migrant worker and gave them necessary guidance. We facilitated transportation through milk vans, vegetable trucks, police jeeps and vehicles of government officials to drop migrants at certain points so as to cover some distance they need to walk. For some migrants, GALU arranged night halt. Team also coordinated with merchants and Govt employees to get | GALU team/community leaders/local govt officials | Migrant workers | 1870 migrant workers were contacted to bring them back. Vehicle arrangement done for 577 interstate migrant workers to bring them back. Vehicle arrangement done for 895 migrant workers including 250 women and 46 |

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| | food packets for migrants who were on the way by foot to their homes. Migrant workers were also provided hot meals and monetary help. | | | children to bring them back from other districts. Vehicle arrangement done for bringing back 577 migrant workers from other state |
| Hot meal and food packets | Due to sudden loss of employment migrant workers have hardly anything in hand to feed themselves and their families including children. As there was no transport, these migrant labour families had no choice other than walking long hours to reach their home in other neighboring districts/states. Families along with children and elders had started walking in groups. | GALU Members | Migrant workers | 451 Migrant workers from other states were provided food 917 migrant from Gujarat were given food |
| Guided direction and tea/biscuit to migrant workers | Migrant workers from UP Bihar MP and Rajasthan were walking day and nights through railway lines and near river banks and internal village road GALU team members and executive members help then to guided internal road and drop them to one block to another and help them to cross borders | GALU Members | Migrant workers | 5817 migrants workers were crossed the borders We have served. Hot meal and Food packets to the migrant workers who were returning home |

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| | at Dahod fatepura/dhanpur /kotada/Vijayanagar/bhiloda/megharaj | | | by walking all the way till their destination. We have also provided biscuits and fruits to such migrant workers |
| Mask manufacturing | <p>We have started manufacturing masks at village level and our distributing it to frontline workers as well as children and vulnerable people in the community.</p> <p>Masks were also distributed to people coming to PDS shops.</p> <p>We have assigned mask manufacturing to single women who will be able to earn a living by sewing masks during such difficult times.</p> <p>We are manufacturing 20000 thousand masks with support of IUF and it will be distributed to NREGA workers</p> | IUF/ Riddhi Mehta | Sabarkantha/Ban askantha/Arvalli | Masks were distributed among 189 women, 271 men and 47 children in April |
| Personal Protective Safety gears for team and members | We have provided gloves, masks and sanitizers to all our field workers. They have been informed about precautions to be taken and asked to maintain social distancing while interacting in public places and during relief work. | DISHA and Individu al | GALU Staff | GALU Field workers in seven Districts. |

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| <p>Medical Assistance</p> | <p>Blood Donation: - GALU team arranged blood for 3 women out of which two were pregnant and they needed blood. Team coordinated with blood donation group in Khedbrahma and arranged blood for these women admitted in Khedbrahma Civil Hospital. Our team also donated blood for a child who had very low hemoglobin and needed blood at Panchmahal</p> <p>Hospital visit: - Since there were no vehicles allowed during lock down and GALU team had vehicle pass, they helped people to reach hospital for consultation and treatment and tiffin for patients</p> <p>Delivering Medicines: - Since people had no means to go out to buy medicines, GALU helped people to procure medicines and reach them. Moreover as old people were vulnerable to disease; GALU Team members facilitated getting medicines from medical stores/Hospital with doctor's prescription. On many instances GALU bore the cost of the medicines as patients were not able to bear the cost of medicines.</p> | <p>GALU Team</p> | <p>Sabarkantha/Banaskantha/Arvalli/MahisagarPanchmahal/Dahod/Chotaudepur</p> | <p>4 instances of blood donation</p> <p>Facilitated 4 women and 19 men and 1 child to reach hospital for medical assistance.</p> <p>Medicines were provided to 29 individuals</p> <p>Tiffin were given to 21 patients</p> |
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| | Children having mild cold and cough were provided cough syrup and other generic medicines. | | | |
| Awareness in community on Covid19 crisis | <p>Our field workers are trying level best to sensitise community about COVID-19.</p> <p>People were communicated about personal hygiene good practices and social distancing measures.</p> <p>Demo was given in the community on proper hand washing.</p> <p>People are asked to use mask or handkerchief/duppatta to cover their nose and mouth to stop infection.</p> <p>We have also made people aware about various schemes like Pradhan mantri Garib kalyan yojana, PM Kisan scheme, increase in NREGA wages etc.</p> | GALU/ Executiv e member | Sabarkantha/Ba naskantha/Arvalli/ MahisagarPanch mahal/Dahod/Ch otaudepur | <p>Total villages:772</p> <p>Total families:5793</p> <p>Total Individuals:23277</p> <p>Total women:1771</p> <p>Total Children:9015</p> <p>Others:3124</p> |
| Awareness campaign through phone and sms | <p>We have developed a communication system through bulk SMS messaging.</p> <p>We have contacted leaders of the village through whom we have covered sensitising communities about Covid -19 in 841 villages.</p> | GALU/ Executiv e member | Sabarkantha/B anaskantha/Arvall i/MahisagarPanc hmahal/Dahod/C hotaudepur | <p>Total villages:841</p> <p>Total individuals:14989</p> <p>Total women:1934</p> <p>Others:176</p> <p>SMS-75127</p> |
| Linking community with relief package | We have contacted government officials of 487 villages and facilitated government relief package benefits to the villages | GALU/ Executiv e member | Sabarkantha/B anaskantha/Arvall i/MahisagarPanc hmahal/Dahod/C hotaudepur | <p>Total villages linked :487</p> <p>Total families:1823</p> <p>Total Individuals:6732</p> <p>Total women:354</p> |

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| Facilitating Government scheme benefit of Jan Dhan yojana | <p>20578 individuals from 665 villages were given awareness about Govt scheme of Rs.500 to women through Jan Dhan yojana.</p> <p>GALU team helped people to fill forms as well as facilitated in getting government scheme benefit of Jan Dhan yojana.</p> | GALU/ Executiv e member | Sabarkantha/B anaskantha/Arvall i/MahisagarPanc hmahal/Dahod/C hotaudepur | Total villages: 530 Women: 4070 |
| Facilitating Government scheme: GRAINS (DRY RATION UNDER NFSA | <p>We are facilitating people in getting adequate amount of Ration through PDS system .Our team escalated the issue of improper and less quantity distribution of ration in 3 PDS shops. Team coordinated with Mamlatdar, District Collector and involved media too. We were able to solve the issue and ensured fair distribution of ration to people. With team members' intervention, APL card holders, migrant labourers and those who did not have ration card also availed ration from PDS shops. We have also provided Dry ration kit to families who do not have many supplies left or whose ration supplies have finished with the help of donors.</p> | Support ed by local authorit y/ monitor ed by GALU team | Sabarkantha/Ba naskantha/Arvalli/ MahisagarPanch mahal/Dahod/Ch otaudepur | Total villages: 437 Total families: 6863 Total Individuals: 25174 |

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| Facilitated Widow pension (Rs.500) | GALU team had prepared list of all the single women of 490 villages. 6613 women from 490 villages were given awareness about widow women pension scheme. Thereafter these widow women were | GALU/ Executiv e member s | Sabarkantha/B anaskantha/Arvall i/MahisagarPanc hmahal/Dahod/C hotaudepur | Facilitated Widow Pension: Total villages: 429 Total women: 6141 |
| Facilitated govt. Help (Rs.1000) | Total 5599 individuals from 670 villages were given information about Rs.1000 government scheme. GALU team helped people fill forms as well as facilitated in getting government scheme benefit of Rs.1000 | GALU/ Executiv e member s | Sabarkantha/B anaskantha/Arvall i/MahisagarPanc hmahal/Dahod/C hotaudepur | Facilitated govt. Help (Rs.1000) Total villages: 652 Total families: 5253 |
| Linking with government | We have highlighted issues through social media (Twitter account) to concerned authorities. Many issues like demand for due wages, starting new work under NREGA, Unemployment allowance for job card holders with no NREGA work etc were highlighted through social media. | GALU/ Executiv e member | Sabarkantha/Ba naskantha/Arvalli/ MahisagarPanch mahal/Dahod/Ch otaudepur | New job started: new work 89 villages started under NREGA |
| Facilitated Filling form for demand for work for Job | Government has relaxed norms for NREGA works according to govt. issued guidelines dated April 20, 2020. We have asked our team to facilitate job card holders to fill forms for NREGA work. After 20 days we did follow up of whether | GALU/ Executiv e member s | All the Job card holders at Sabarkantha, BanaskanthaArva lli,MahisagarPanc | Total forms filled for NREGA works: 2251 job card holders including 391 women from 840 families of 109 |

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| card holders under NREGA | NREGA jobs have started. At many places NREGA work had not started we highlighted the issue to the concerned government authority through social media platform (twitter) with all the necessary documents attached. Thereafter MGNREGA works have started in many blocks. | | hmahal,Dahod,C hotaudepur | villages' filled form for NREGA works. Due wages paid: Rs.5900000 due wages paid to 705 workers from 19 villages |
| Translating government Govt. GR | We have translated list of circulars and government GR announced for combating Covid -19 into local language(Gujarati) for ready reference for our team. | GALU/ Executive member | GALU staff/Volunteers | All the materials translated in local language were made available to GALU staff/Childline staff/Volunteers/Nagrik shala students |

Challenges faced during Lockdown period:

- Safety and Hygiene issues are one of our main concerns. We have sensitized our team about protective measures to be taken during visit to public areas. As Covid-19 is very contagious we have asked our team to wear mask at all times and to sanitise hands regularly after visiting community. We have also asked them to strictly adhere to social distancing to prevent spread of the communicable disease.
- Our team was finding it difficult to undertake relief activities due to strict restrictions in movement because of lockdown across the state. Later we took permissions from concerned authorities and were able to gain passes to continue with our relief activities.

- It is difficult to get general medicines for patients. We are asked to bring patients along to get medicines. We are also informed to get Covid tested for these patients before giving medicines. It becomes difficult to get medicines by the team for terminally ill patients like patients with heart ailment, diabetes, Tuberculosis, etc to get medicines during lockdown. We take their prescription and provide medical supplies.
- Migrant workers walk through railway lines and near river banks and contact team for help. It becomes difficult for field workers to reach at the spot due to non availability of patrol.
- Difficult to meet Government officials. No outside persons are allowed at government premises.
- Many of our team member do not have smart phone which delay some of the work

Case Studies: 1

***Providing Dry ration**

Urmila's father passed away a few years back due to TB and it is her widowed mother who was looking after the family of 3 children with the meager income she earned from daily wage labour. Urmila has two brothers and her mother is the sole bread winner of the family.

The sudden-nationwide lockdown due to Covid-19 pandemic forced Urmila's mother, Sejalben also to remain at home, shutting down all sources of income. The family ran out of money and supply and all were hungry. They spent a day without any food and were in distress. The second day Urmila made a call from neighbour's mobile, hoping for some help.

Our Team understood the situation and promptly contacted our local donors. With donors' contribution, we procured groceries and reached out to Urmila's family with a month's supply. The donor- Memon kdarbhai also assured that he would supply groceries to the family till lock down gets over. He further promised to fund Urmila's education until she completes her education.

Urmila is happy and grateful for she believes that it is with the help of GALU her family got the support in times of distress. She said she does not need to worry about her education also now. Thus, GALU brought smile and relief to Urmila and her family.

Case Studies: 2

***Facilitated taking new born child home**

On 13/4/2020 a person informed that his wife delivered a baby on 12/4/2020 in Gopi hospital in Bhuravav -Godhra. Since it was lock down, vehicles were not available to get back home with his new born child and the mother.

On 13/4/2020 itself our team member visited hospital and met the caller. Though 108 were contacted, they were not ready to provide service saying that service is provided only for a ride from home to hospital but not from hospital to home. Our team member then contacted doctor in the hospital and he suggested their ambulance service. But the cost of ambulance was high that family could not afford it.

GALU field worker therefore contacted the service of Khilkhilat and requested help. But they also denied their service saying that they provide service only to those in Government hospitals. Team member further contacted and coordinated with charitable organization called Humanist Association and they provided ambulance service at much lower cost. Thus with timely intervention, we were able to send the new born child and the mother safely to their home during lockdown.

Case Studies: 3

***APL card converted in BPL**

Ganava is an interior village in Poshina block of Sabarkantha. There are 36 APL-1 families in the village. The PDS shop owner did not give ration to these families stating that they are in APL-1 category. BPL category was given ration supply at first. BPL families were given 3.5 kg wheat, 1.5kg rice, 1kg dal, 1kg sugar and 1kg salt per person.

The APL families of Ganava did not get ration and so one of the persons belonging to APL category contacted Mukeshbhai. Mukeshbhai is student of Nagrik Shala, a training course facilitated by GALU. All the BPL cards were converted to APL after ration card distribution. Mukeshbhai along with family members of all the APL card holders sat on Dharna maintaining physical distancing in front of the PDS shop with their APL ration cards. The matter was taken to mamlatdar and by evening Mamlatdar as well as deputy mamlatdar and Talati shri came to the spot and assured that APL card of all these families will be converted to BPL so that they can get ration.

The very next day, all the APL cards were converted to BPL cards immediately. Priority seal was stamped. All the families received ration according to BPL category. All the families thanked Mukeshbhai for his sincere efforts.

Case Studies: 4

***Name: Ramabhai Kangabhai Nayak**

Village: Dungarpur, Dhanpur

Dist:Dahod

My name is Ramabhai Kangabhai Nayak .My family consists of 10 members out of which eight members work as agriculture labourers at Saurashtra during season. The rest of the year we do casual labour to earn a living. Due to nationwide lockdown owing to COVID-19 we were not able to get any work and all our family members are at home. It is difficult for us to feed our family. As per government guidelines we were informed by Eklavya Sangathan that we would be getting dry ration through PDS shops for three months.

On 1-4-2020 I went to ration shop to get dry ration .I have BPL card and asked shopkeeper to give me ration. Shop keeper gave me only ration for two people I did not take the ration and came back home disappointed. I rang up Eklavya Sangathan and informed Dilipbhai that I have not received full quantity of ration. Dileepbhai guided me and checked online about how much ration I am eligible. I was informed by Dilipbhai that I am eligible of getting ration for 10 members of my family.

The next day I went to PDS shop along with Dilipbhai and he rang up Mamlatdar and made him aware about the situation. Mamlatdar spoke to PDS shop owner and gave him strict warning that he should distribute adequate amount of ration to all the card holders from the two villages namely Dungarpur and Nansalai or else his license will be cancelled.

Due to Sangathan's timely action, all the card holders of Dungarpur and Nansalai got full ration. I am grateful that we did not have to sleep hungry during these tough times due to Sangathan's efforts.

Case Studies: 5

***Name: Bhabhor Rameshbhai Rasulbhai**

Village: Fulpari

Dist: Dahod

My name is Bhabhor Rameshbhai Rasulbhai. I am 38 years old. I am a resident of Fulpari in Dahod. I did not get appropriate amount of ration from PDS shop. I wrote an application to Sangathan about the issue. A representative from Sangathan visited my house and took more information. Later with the help of Sangathan I gave an application to Mamlatdar personally .He informed that I shall get my ration once the stock for APL ration comes.

After three days Union informed that PDS has started distributing for APL card holder. I went to PDS shop and shop owner gave me 10.5kg wheat, 4.5kg rice, 1kg Dal and 1kg Sugar. I appreciate the efforts put by Union members from the bottom of my heart for serving us without any hesitation even during lockdown period.

Case Studies: 6

***Name : Hasinabano yasminkhan Pathan**

Age:45yrs

Village:Jitpur

Dist:Banaskantha

My name is Hasinabano and I am a resident of Jitpur. I am 45 years old. I have two sons. I have a grocery store and I earn my living by selling grocery. During lockdown period my grocery store was shut and I am not able to earn.

I am a diabetic patient since past five years. I also have high blood pressure. I need medicines worth Rs 2000 a month to keep my illness under control. During lockdown, section 144 (Indian Penal Code) was imposed in the district and I was not able to buy my medicines. My health started to worsen after a week of not taking any medication. I had left all hopes. My son was very worried about my condition and he spoke to GALU worker and explained about the situation.

As jitpur village had 3 corona cases it was declared containment zone. GALU worker took prescription through whatsapp brought medicines and was about to give it when police intercepted and asked the reason of visit. Later my son went and took the medicines at the outskirts of the village. I was able to get medicines due to GALU. GALU team member was god sent savior who saved my life during this crises situation. I am really thankful to GALU for facilitating medicines.

***Facilitated food for migrant workers:**

On 24-4-2020 GALU team found 11 persons including 1 woman and 4 children sitting under a Mahuva tree. While inquiring they informed that they have come from Surat. They

were tired so they were sitting under the tree to relax. Migrant workers informed that they were working at Surat. Due to nationwide lockdown they lost their jobs and had no money .So they decided to go back to their native place. They were heading to Kanpur district of Uttar Pradesh. They informed that it has been five days since they started walking from Surat. While further inquiring they informed that they have not eaten proper meal since 5 days and are eating packet food during day with the meagre money left with them.

GALU- GS spoke to the migrant workers over phone and asked them whether they would like to stay or go ahead to their native place. Migrant workers informed that they would like to go back to their native place. Migrant workers were made aware about precautionary measures to be taken for COVID -19.

GALU Team members arranged proper dinner for the workers. Their mobile phones were recharged by GALU and each worker was given Rs.200 per head. Night stay arrangements were done by GALU team at Dungri high school. The next day they were given proper guidance of the route ahead. Dry ration kit was provided to the workers with rice, dal and spices for journey ahead.