

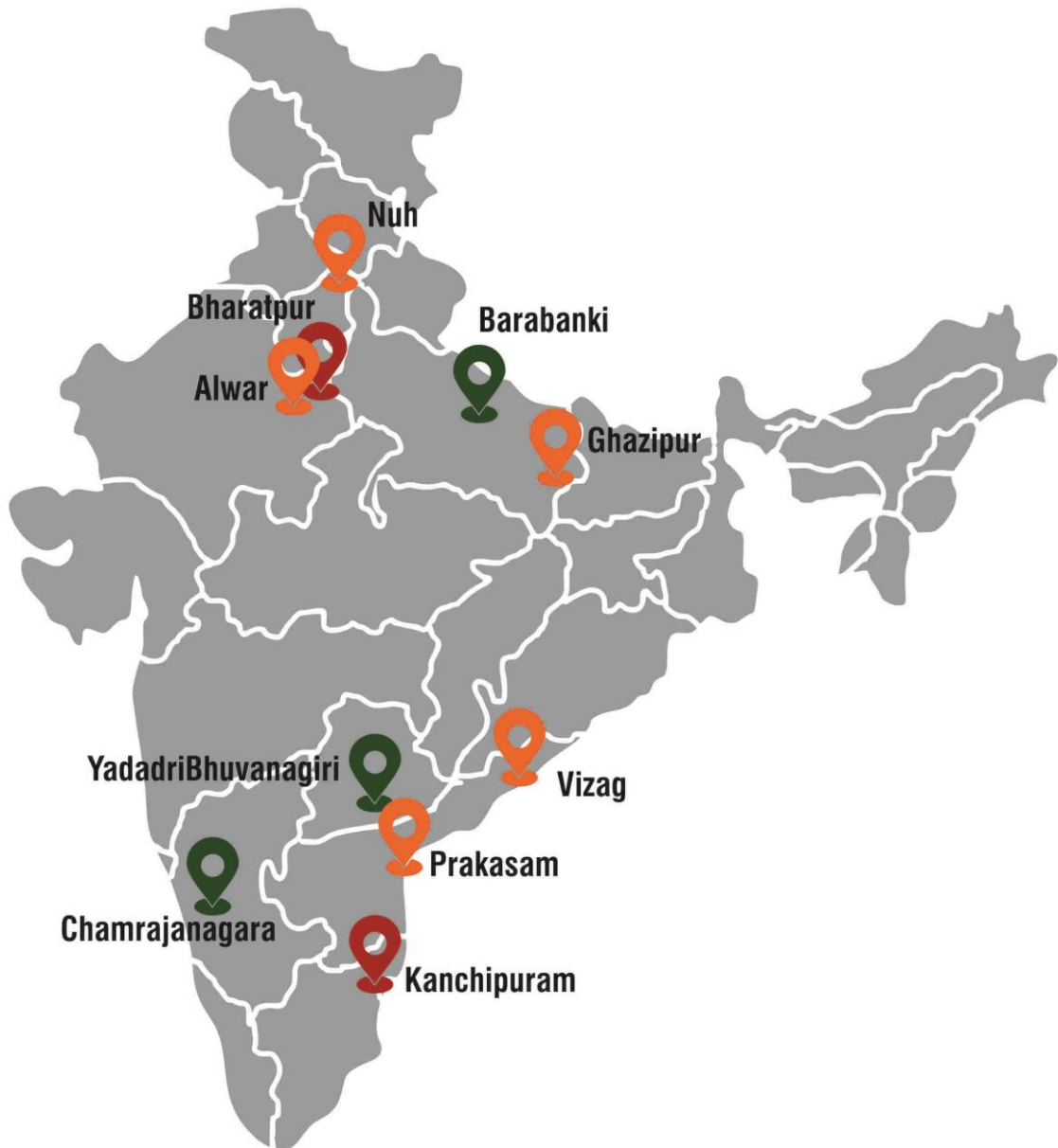
THE CHRONICLE OF EVENTS DURING THE PANDEMIC SITUATION



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. Smartpur Centers across 117 locations in India has been rigorously responding to the crisis by reaching out to the most vulnerable communities.

After mapping the needs of the communities in rural regions, Smartpur centres identified that the immediate need was for information dissemination and creating awareness on Coronavirus, its symptoms and preventive measures. Further, awareness around the relief package, Prime Minister Gareeb Kalyan Yojana, was raised through Smartpur Digital Mobile Van, Public Address system and WhatsApp groups. These measures were initiated in Nuh (Haryana), and later replicated in other Smartpur locations. This proved to be one of the most effective ways of disseminating information and ensuring social distancing.

Smartpur District Wise Zone List on **Covid-19**

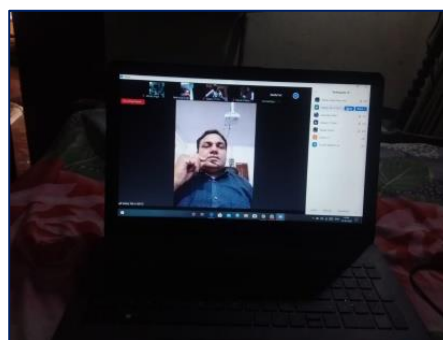


Simultaneously, the Smartpur teams created a Covid19 relief kit which included dry ration to help families sustain for a month along with masks and information guide on Coronavirus. These programs were conducted with the help of local/ community funds and administration support. As on May 8, 2020 nearly 18,700 families across seven states enjoyed this provision.

Education Pillar: e-Learning

Smartpur's e-learning caters to educational requirement

With the onset of the lockdown due to Covid-19, one of the most interactive pillar with digital literacy students and the major source of income for all the ITpreneurs under Smartpur project was at stake. After the first phase of lockdown extension, soon they initiated e-learning through portals such as Zoom and Google Classes. Online classes on fundamentals and formulas of MS Excel are conducted by Santosh Upadhyay, IT trainer of Karaiya centre (Ghazipur, UP) for more than 16 students. As a result, this became an alternative to cater to the educational requirements of the community and was replicated in rest of the centres too. 15 WhatsApp groups have been formed through which more than 200 children are connected across all Smartpur centres in India.



Health Pillar: Tele-health and Tele-services

Smartpur Centers have emerged as the point of contact for people who are unable to visit doctors or health clinics for non-Emergency/Preventive services. Our Healthpreneur (Health Entrepreneur) at Smartpur centers provide an online solution to the patients through DocOnline's platform of 300 doctors who consult patients in multiple languages. This includes basic tests which are facilitated by the Preneur. During lockdown, this online service has been a benefit for many deprived souls.

Everybody with a smartphone in the village was asked to download Aarogya Setu app to measure the spread awareness of COVID19 and to connect with the essential health services. In each location, close to 350 downloads have been recorded.

The Smartpur 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

Seeing the increase in Coronavirus cases, hygiene and hand-washing sessions were conducted even before the lockdown in Smartpur Alwar (Ghasoli) and Bharatpur Hub(Ladamka) as well as Spoke Centres such Musakheda, Biderka, Medabas, Khanpur Mewan, Rustompur, Thekri, Daniyalpur Kheda and others. During the session, correct way of hand-washing was demonstrated and children were taught how it 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.



Governance Pillar: e-Governance

Women beneficiaries those who have the Jan Dhan account received Rs 500/- each from the government. The Bhimapar Hub 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 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 adversely hit due to the crisis. Our Smartpur Center entrepreneurs like Prashant Yadav immediately started disbursed the benefits of the scheme to the eligible persons and also provided with linkages to those who were not registered.

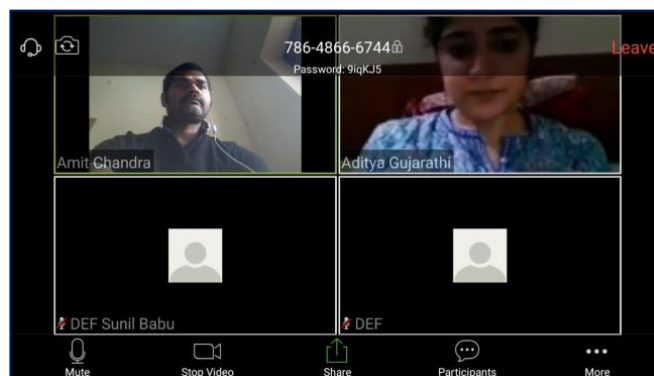


Extending e-Governance to farmers

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.



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. The Smartpur 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.



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, Smartpur 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 Smartpur 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 (Barabanki, UP), is enrolled for old age pension but couldn't 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 from anywhere.

Finally one day Lallan Prasad Yadav of Smartpur 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 unserved 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 was deteriorating.

Under the 'Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana', INR 2000 is transferred to every farmer's account that is registered under this scheme. "With the help of that money, I would have completed my agriculture and other requirements, but my 1st instalment hasn't reached me. In the hope of receiving that money, I have already spent a lot on travelling but got no success."

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



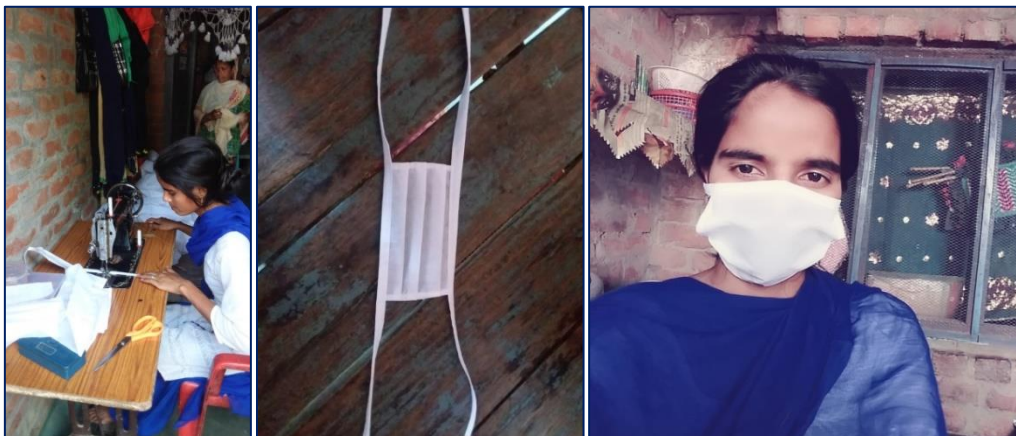
Livelihood Pillar: Alternate Livelihood in Time of Crisis

After reviewing the effects of COVID-19 all across the world, Digital Empowerment Foundation decided to conduct a Baseline Survey under their Smartpur project and the purpose of this survey was to analyse how badly the areas are affected with COVID-19 and what is the impact of the complete lockdown in Smartpur locations. 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. In order to address this issue, Smartpur Kollegal center (Karnataka) headed by D. Kumar (Project officer) and Madhuri (Centre Coordinator) has started manufacturing the masks at Hannur, Karnataka. The purpose of making these masks is to help the poor by providing them free and also to generate income/ alternative livelihood by selling it to the local Chemist shop. 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, Smartpur 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 freely. A group of women (around 10-12) consisting of 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.



Smartpur Ghazipur team also created women entrepreneurs who have now turned out to be real change makers by preparing more than 2500 masks for hospitals and clinics. Even the local Women of Vizag were trained on how to make masks with minimal resources. However at the same time they were provided with cotton material by Digital Empowerment Foundation to reduce their struggle. They prepared the masks especially for the old age and the pregnant women.

Through this an alternate livelihood opportunity has also developed for them which have made them confident and more secure.

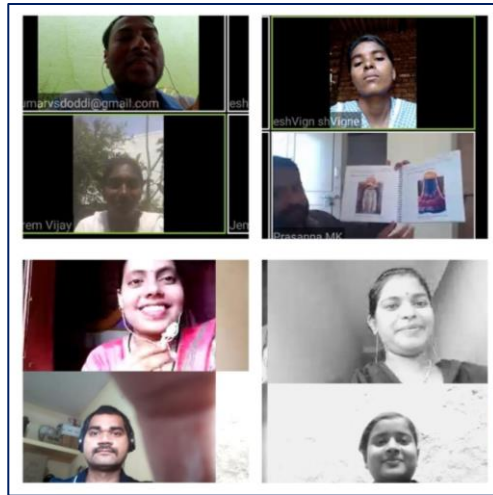
DEF's another contribution to fight the COVID-19 situation is visible in its initiative of producing 1000 Masks by Thotavaripalem vocational tailoring centre run by Mr. N. Koteswara Rao, Smartpur Spoke Coordinator, with the linkage with NABARD Programme. There are about 40-50 women who got trained in tailoring. Now, out of these 50 women 20 are engaged in mask making at low cost by getting order from different service providers.



Under covid-19 support, SMARTPUR teams came forward to distribute it to unreached poor and needy people and took orders to stitch 1000 masks. These trainers are also involved in Smartpur's livelihood programme entrepreneurship training for weavers specially designed for working women. In the present lockdown situation they got work from home.

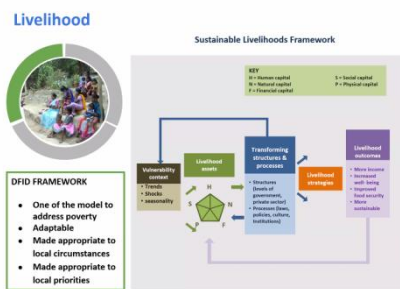
Online digital entrepreneurship programme for women

Further, to enable women entrepreneurs in rural India explore and connect with the digital world and enhance their livelihood opportunities especially in the times of crisis, digital entrepreneurship programme 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.

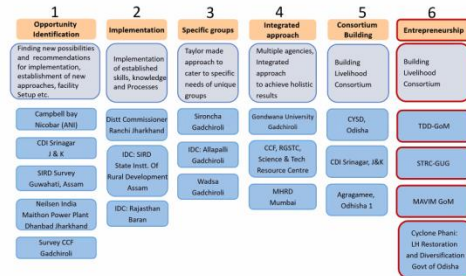


Webinar- post- covid-19- rural livelihood restoration & diversification

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 who discussed about various aspects of the livelihood intervention. Professor Sandesh who specialises in design and livelihoods and is 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 the 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



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. Our Smartpur 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 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 were 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 senior citizens and children. While distributing they explained the 5 steps of hand-washing 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, Smartpur 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 individuals and further helped them to get in touch with Odisha government where the officer in-charge assured assistance immediately. The Smartpur team also shared the Dos and Don'ts with the migrant workers to fight corona virus.



Covid-19 relief by mapping and identifying

Smartpur's Bhimapur team in Ghazipur, 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 Smartpur centers across India 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.



Awareness through Smartpur's digital van

The Smartpur team of Haryana has been conducting an awareness drive through our digital service van. So far they have covered around 10 villages distributing masks and soaps to those who are vulnerable and ensuring that the villagers follow preventive health measures. In fact, during their awareness drive, the team met many migrant labourers walking on foot to reach their village since there was no transportation available. They were hungry, tired and with no protective gear against corona. Our Foot Soliders helped they reach their destination and also provided the kit as per their necessity.



Kanchipuram team in action

The Smartpur team of Kanchipuram is supporting the communities through digital means by providing services and information related to #Covid19 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_1l8HRvOsMIU3EC7EYbairs-vYTJ5CzQsU0H0VCGJKztCt6jBTx4U

Few other videos:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TjtApXC6HTc&t=2s>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jvNXBSxChyw&t=3s>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjwL2LJ2cQ>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4Lb1iOPTnU>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3MPQMDSC4>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHUbNhnWbeM>