

COMMUNITY SUPPORT TO UNORGANIZED WORKERS DURING COVID

19 CRISIS : Stories from Ballia , Begusarai , Delhi and Varanasi

Kher (1947, p. 7) states: *'The aim of social work, as generally understood, is to remove social injustice, to relieve distress, to prevent suffering and to assist the weaker member of society to rehabilitate themselves and their families and in short fight the five giant evils of (1) Physical wants, (2) Disease, (3) Ignorance, (4) Squalor, (5) Idleness'*.

P.M. Modi's announcement of a lockdown in India on 25 March 2020 introduced 'social distancing' to tackle the Covid-19 outbreak in the informal sector, the worst hit-off sector, as observed in Seelampur Field Setting. Here, *trainee social workers, including myself, assisted cable strippers families by providing contact details of DUSIB Centers of the government that provide food kits to distressed people in Delhi* ,prior to direct engagement in relief work in my hometown Varanasi, I learnt *community work ideas from cities like Begusarai and Ballia* , where I understood that the *Sharing is Caring* policy is being adopted by the resourceful people of the society who are helping migrant workers, families and individuals, by providing food ration kits. Sai Ki Rasoi is one such organization actively involved in such work in Begusarai.

After this, I began an individual platform, *Pahal* where I identified two families with the help of local people and delivered two weeks of food rations.

The first case, Minta Devi, a housemaid and her son, a mason, had been out of a job for more than 20 days. All they had was a gas cylinder provided by a neighbour. The rations included:

1. 5 kg rice
2. 5 kg Wheat flour

3. 1 kg pigeon pea
4. 1 bottle mustard oil
5. 500/- given to buy vegetables

The second case involves an 80 year-old lady, abandoned by her family. She is blind in one eye, begs, and lives in a rented room. I decided to assist her. Local people helped ask what she needed. She said that she usually did not cook and only eat either flattened rice or parched paddy. Thus, I purchased:

1. 1 kg of flattened rice
2. 1 kg of parched paddy
3. Two packets of biscuits
4. 1 kg of sugar
5. and 500/-

Later on trainee I found the names of organizations providing relief aid to poor sections of Varanasi, and passed on contact details to assist these two families, and others in need.

These organisations are:

- ✓ Sajha Sanskriti Manch
- ✓ Jan Vikas Samiti
- ✓ Rotary Club
- ✓ Bharat Sevashram Sangh
- ✓ Diksha Mahila Kalyan Shodh Sansthan
- ✓ Kashi Mumukshu Bhawan

These have adopted the policy of providing relief aid by working with local people in specific areas for better identification and assistance. They all operate under the name of *Daridra Narayan Seva*.

This experience also enabled me to understand the value of solidarity and cooperative work under Covid-19.

REFERENCE: Nayak,Deepak , History, Philosophy and Fields of Social Work

<https://ddceutkal.ac.in/Syllabus/MSW/PAPER-1.pdf>

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