

Project Evaluation Report of: COVID-19 Relief Fund for Daily Wage Workers of Chandigarh/Tricity By Chhoti Si Asha

About the Campaign

Amid the rising number of Coronavirus cases around the world and in India, lockdown was announced by the Indian government on 21st March 2020. The suspension of work left the entire worker force of the country in a very vulnerable situation, especially workers from the unorganized sector (daily wagers and migrant labourers), as they are the mostly neglected and ignored in all the policies and relief measures taken by the authorities. Realizing the gravity of situation and need to immediately support them and their families with food, Chhoti Si Asha along with Amy Singh stepped up to the crisis and initiated a campaign to reach out to the daily-wager community in the Tricity area. We started an online campaign on the Our Democracy website to raise funds to support the daily wagers of the city.

The objectives behind this campaign were:

- To identify the needy Individuals and provide them with a with minimum relief amount of INR 3000/per month, or more depending upon their circumstances and needs
- To help Individuals and families in either cash or kind (in the form of ration kits that could support them for minimum 3 weeks)



During the Lockdown, the administration of Tricity also imposed a curfew to restrict the movement of people. Many workers got stuck at their sites and many were left without food and the means to buy some. Due to the imposition of the curfew, we altered our relief campaign and the focus shifted to reaching out to the needy with more of ration kits which should sustain them for 3 weeks and give monetary support only to those with dire needs (especially for medicines etc.)

Word about the campaign spread through our networks and social media channels and calls started pouring in, some from people who knew about the labourers stuck at nearby places and some from the distressed themselves.

Plan of Action

The work started with a mere number of 6-7 people, coming together and dividing the tasks identified among themselves. An online campaign was initiated by Amy Singh on the Our Democracy website to raise funds to help the needy individuals. Link to the campaign: <https://www.ourdemocracy.in/Campaign/Covid19reliefCHD> -

We began the process of-

1. Identification of the distressed migrant labourers and daily wagers.
2. Procurement of the Ration and Packaging.
3. Distribution within the Identified communities.

We asked friends and known sources to identify the needy families around them and verify the requirements of the families. Information was received via Google forms filled by people in our network who knew about such people. Chhoti si Asha (which has been working in these areas since 2006) reached out to the distressed families in Janta Colony, Khudda Jassu, village Khudda Lahora and Colony Number 1 and 2 of Khudda Lahora (area of operations of Chhoti Si Asha (CSA)). The reach out helped us to identify the first set of Families who needed immediate relief. Our Volunteers managed to get pass to move around for the relief work and started the process of procurement of Ration and its distribution.

Once our volunteers were on the ground, we identified numerous people who were in dire need of food. With word about our relief campaign started spreading to different areas, we began receiving many distressed calls. With every passing day, our area of operations expanded to Sector 25, Sector 52, Dhanas and Mullanpur and also pockets of Panchkula.

Each Ration Kit Included:



The Ration Kits were intended to support a family of 5 individuals for at least 3 weeks so that the movement of Volunteers and Family on ground is minimal. So, we tried to include all the essentials in a kit that a family would need to support itself.

Our Reach

- Chhoti Si Asha reached out to the families of migrant labourers and daily-wagers of Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula.
- A total of 610 families were provided ration kits by the organisation and 60 families were supported monetarily.
- Our Volunteers also coordinated with other groups and organisations working in the relief work and coordinated the distribution of the kits prepared by them as well. Local Newspaper Dainik Bhaskar gave us 700 Ration Kits which were distributed among the localities identified and verified by our volunteers.
- Our Campaign helped us raise a sum of ₹8,47,269 for our campaign, of which ₹7,79,321 has been spent on relief kits.

Details of Collection and Usage of Funds:



Ground Report from the distribution team:

The Distribution process has been divided in 3 phases.

Phase 1: From 26th March till 1st April, 2020

- Distribution in the 1st phase started in **Janta Colony (Naya Gaon, Punjab)**. We started with Janta Colony because Chhoti Si Asha has been running an after-school program in the colony for the last 10 years, so we were aware about a lot of the needy families there. Our volunteers identified around 20 most needy families including two widows taking care of their kids.
- Next area was **Khudda Lahora**, where CSA's workshop is based. Word about the relief campaign spread like wild fire in a few hours and our team got flooded with distressed calls from all over Chandigarh.
- We also helped two local volunteers Mr. Kanwaljeet and Daljeet Ami, who distributed the ration kits in Dhanas and Sector 52, Mohali.
- Our Volunteers also offered to facilitate ration distribution for a relief campaign that was being run by a local Newspaper, Dainik Bhaskar. We helped in the distribution of 700 ration kits prepared by them thereby reaching out to 700 families.
- The demand for food and the work required to be done was shooting up. At this time, Chhoti Si Asha's team was clearly divided into three major groups. One group was looking after the fund raise, the second was keeping the records and helping in the logistics (Ration procurement and Pacing kits) and the third one working on the ground in the distribution of the kits and coordinating the ground work.

Challenges during Phase 1:

- Since we acted instantly to the distressed calls in the lockdown, the 1st Phase went quite unorganised on the ground.
- After a few days, our volunteers also found that other organisations and individuals are also distributing Ration and Langar (Cooked Food) to the needy. But they too were responding on impulse to the distressed. This led to unorganised and uneven food distribution, with some areas being reached out and some being totally left out.
- The workings of the administration and the Government's relief measures were not known to our volunteers initially. To take a comprehensive look at the situation and ensure maximum coverage of relief measures, it became necessary to understand how the administration works, what relief resources they have and when the Government would release funds for relief.





“Initial days were super hectic, we used to go early and come back late night, we were doing surveys, listening to the fears and sadness of the daily wagers and delivering ration at the same time. It was going all together”

-Sharing from the distribution team working on the ground.

Phase 2: From 1st to 5th April, 2020

- Phase 2 involved planning, organising and collaborating with the Administration.
- Due to the increased number of distressed calls the situation became even more hectic than before. Dainik Bhaskar too ran out of ration after serving 2000 families. But still a large portion of labourers/daily wagers were left waiting.
- A dire need to coordinate the working of various relief campaigns running in Tricity was felt to ensure every area was being covered and minimum movement happens in these areas. Therefore, a meeting with the local administration was requested and the following measures were proposed:
 - a) Firstly, to call all the NGOs and other people working with civil societies and bringing them under the supervision of a Govt. appointed Nodal Officer.
 - b) Then allocating specific areas among the NGOs that were working on the ground. In order to maintain social distancing and restrict movement, NGOs were restricted to the areas they were already working in. This also helped in ensuring that there is no duplicity in one area.
 - c) Thirdly, the Local Administration and other organisations provide data regarding the number of families of daily wagers they reached and those who are still left in their respective areas.
 - d) And then pooling of resources and helping fellow NGOs and Volunteers working in the respectively divided areas. This was most difficult to achieve due to local politics being at play.



Phase 3: 5th April, 2020 onwards

- Third Phase was about moving forward in tandem with the Administration.
- Working in tandem with the local administration gave us insights into the workings of the system. We offered our support everywhere we could. It was decided to divide the entire area of 21 wards of the Nayagaon Area into 7 clusters. Each cluster was assigned to an NGO. A Government official was also assigned to each cluster so that both Administration and NGO can distribute the resources wisely.
- A centralised WhatsApp group was made. Each distress call was forwarded in that group and the respective NGO working in that area was tagged. If the concerned NGO had the resources, then immediately ration was despatched, if not, then the concerned official would respond to it.



Guidelines for smooth execution:

1. We laid more emphasis on distribution of **Dry Ration for at least three weeks** over serving cooked meals daily, to maintain social distancing and restrict movement, which was not possible while serving cooked meals because it creates a compulsion to go again and again in any community.
2. Make a 2-member team of volunteers and divide the community area between these teams.
3. Distribution of Ration is the most difficult task. There are many methods of execution of this process, whatever method you choose, always keep in mind the Social Distancing concept.
4. Work with the help of Local Administration. Please do not go in any community without permission from the Administration.
5. While going into a community for distribution, please report to the police station of that area and take the police personnel along for better management and protection as well.
6. Do everything mindfully and avoid rushing in the distribution stage. Deliver patiently and wisely.

Current Challenges:

1. Effective coordination and implementation of the distribution of ration kits at the ground is still a major challenge.
2. All the distressed Calls are still not addressed due to lack of resources on the part of government and NGOs.
3. Our volunteers still receive 15-20 daily distressed calls for Ration and at times for monetary help. As per the estimate of our volunteers, we still have a backlog of 350-400 families.
4. Since the lockdown has been extended by the government till 3rd May 2020, the organisation predicts that the demand for ration would continue and increase and might need to refill the initial Ration kits distributed among the families.
5. With the increasing restrictions and very little help from the administration, the condition of the daily wage workers is deploring with every passing day.

