



TRED

Livelihood Support to the Dalit Victims of Lockdown

Thalavadi

1. Introduction:

As all the human beings are under threat-across the continents due to the spread of Corona virus, as on 15th of April nearly 2 million people were affected. More than 1.26 lakh people have died. And the whole world is under lock down since it is the only temporary solution to arrest the spread. But the lockdown is very much new to the world and it has caused tremendous changes in the nature, animals and the lives of people. For some it is manageable but to the other it is highly stressful. People are economically deprived and they have anxiety about taking care of the family, future of the children etc.



So the lock down is good for the protection from the pandemic virus but for the poor it is a burden. They face challenges on a daily basis for food. As the whole world is facing the challenge of combating Covid 19, a lot of people in India unfortunately have the challenge of fighting hunger and poverty too.

2. Incidence:

Novel corona virus entered into India on 30.01.20, Covid-19 really became widespread in the month of March. On 3rd of March the cases spiked up to 1263 with 32 deaths. And on 20th April, the number of affected persons rose nearly to 18000 with nearly 600 deaths. In India the nature of spread is termed as cluster of cases.

The lockdown to arrest the spread of Corona virus was announced by the government of India from the 25th of March for 21 days (In Tamilnadu state it was from 24th March). In light of the COVID-19 situation on consultation with States, PM announced the extension of the national lockdown in India till 3rd May,

The lock down and the closure of the state borders have exposed one pathetic phenomenon that of the plight of migrant laborers. Thousands of people-migrant workers have started

walking hundreds of kilo meters, back to their native villages. Together with this another drastic issue came to light-the plight of daily wage earners due Lock down. According to the Economic Survey of 2018-19, there are 150.6 million of regular wage earners and daily wagers. Most of these migrant workers and unorganized laborers are dalits or Adivasis.

3. India's Response:

Government of India is taking all necessary steps to ensure that people are prepared well to face the challenge and threat posed by the growing pandemic of COVID-19. With active support of the people of India, the Government has been able to contain the spread of the Virus in the country. The most important factor in preventing the spread of the Virus locally is to empower the citizens with the right information and taking precautions as per the advisories being issued by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare held a video conference with health functionaries and senior officials as well as field officers of WHO SEARO and Country Office on the containment measures for COVID-19 in India. A high-level Task Force has been formed to work on the frontiers of science related to drug testing and vaccines. Through the Task Force, the Government will further facilitate, keep track and monitor the progress of national and international efforts in vaccine development.

India has been fighting the outbreak of the pandemic corona virus but the lock down? Amid nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of novel corona virus, people are forced to stay indoors with the daily wage workers worst affected. The covid-19 lockdown has robbed the daily wage workers of their daily income. They struggle to buy food with no money. The Governments, both the central and the state is trying to ease the situation, through various schemes. But there is less and less of social security. Incidentally, there are many people and organizations that have come forward to help the affected people mostly with groceries and food materials across the country. But still there are hundreds of families who are struggling.

4. Intervention:

To be part of the relief and help the people come out of the crisis, TRED came up with the idea to help the dalit families who are daily wage workers. Initially, TRED started the relief, providing Rs.1000 to 15 Dalit families in Doddagajanur village, in Thalavadi. After consulting the board members, TRED approached Sarvodaya- Germany for some assistance. Both Michael and Sabine were more than ready to support the cause. TRED planned to support fifty families of dalit construction workers, painters, hair dressers etc with groceries that would suffice for a month or so. These families are from three areas - Thalavadi, Anna nagar and Doddagajanur. A through planning was made with three volunteers, one from each area- Ravi, Sundaram and Jayaraj. With the help of these volunteers the list of fifty most deserving people was made.

With the view to respect the stipulations by the Government, the following steps were taken:

- A perfect Day for the distribution (20.04.20) was fixed.
- The shop that was close to most of the people was selected (Puttusamy Stores).
- The list of Grocery was made together with the shopkeeper for Rs.1500-done through watsapp. The grocery list is attached below.
- The Thasildar (Taluk Revenue officer) was informed.
- Fifty Tokens were prepared with the seal of TRED and given to the beneficiaries through the volunteers on the previous day. Together with the tokens, a list of Groceries to be received was given to the people for checking the items later.
- The shopkeeper was asked to get ready with the fifty groceries' packages.
- On the 20th morning the people from Thalavadi (25 beneficiaries) were asked to be present in the shop at 9.30.
- On receiving the tokens, the shop keeper distributed the 25 packages.
- Yuvanamathie and Jaichitra monitored the distribution.
- The Thasildar supported the program by his presence.
- The remaining 25 packages were collected by Viennie, and were distributed to the families (10 in Annanagar+15 in Doddagajanur) at 9.45 a.m and 10.00 a.m respectively.

The distribution went on really well. Besides taking into consideration the Government's order of curfew, we monitored the social distancing for a safer process. The beneficiaries cooperated in this process and time keeping by the different parties was really great. The contribution of the three volunteers was quite remarkable.

S.No	Item		Rate
1	Toor Dhall	2 kg	240
2	Black gram	1 kg	140
3	Green gram	2 kg	280
4	Ravai-Bansi	2 kg	96
5	Ravai-Rice	2 kg	88
6	Green Peas	1/2 kg	70
7	Bengal gram	1 kg	75

8	Sun Flower oil	2 litre	236
9	Wheat powder	1 kg	48
10	Tea powder	¼ kg	55
11	Sambar powder	100 gram	35
12	Chicken Masalapowder	100 gram	40
13	Mutton Masala powder	100 gram	40
14	Turmeric powder	100 gram	30
15	Powder salt	2 kg	20
16	Total(Rs)		1493

5. Impact

TRED is happy that these families, especially the women would be much more than satisfied looking at their erstwhile empty kitchen having enough groceries. The fullness will be an experience in itself. TRED is also satisfied for having accomplished this livelihood support to the most deserving people. The beneficiaries were very much grateful to TRED. And TRED is thankful to Sarvodaya.

Another highlight of this program was that two of the beneficiaries in Thalavadi, gave their gifts to two other families whom they thought needed more. In Anna Nagar also the people were talking of some widows. Later, some people approached us for help. These experiences lead TRED to explore more donations to reach out to the other needy persons, in the near future.

While we are happy about the reduction in crime rate, increase in better quality of family life, miraculously clean and silent streets, the music of the birds, we are also happy about the Good Samaritans in the society. Another salient feature of this current situation is that it has brought communities closer.

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