

The Influencer Bulletin

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Forcing families to stay at home, the lockdown has fostered stress, insecurity and violence towards women and girls affecting their mental health and well-being. While such challenges continue to persist, opportunities for change have also been witnessed. CORO has enabled women, grassroots leaders, to respond to the realities at the ground, Shaheen that has been lending a voice for the survivors along with Jan Sahas that is facilitating awareness of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan (PMGKY) for promoting employment opportunities.

Gendered Consequences of COVID-19 Crisis: Implications for the Young

While the vulnerability of certain age groups like elderly and the children have been more pronounced across the pandemic, the lockdown nevertheless has its own repercussions for the young with exacerbated inequities, especially more so in the case of women. A survey conducted by **CORO**; with young 32 women and 36 men, from low-income communities in Mumbai's M-ward has brought to light these following concerns:

- Young women and men reported a visible increase in violence against women during the lockdown - the most common being physical and mental violence.
- Girls and women are mostly shouldering the burden of household responsibilities during this time, with their mobility being severely restricted.
- Unemployment and lack of resources have led to an increased fight among couples. Impact on mental well-being like high levels of frustration, restlessness, sleeplessness, headaches, lack of hunger, stress was being noted.
- Young women feared that their education would be discontinued due to financial distress and even men reported their academic schedule would likely be disrupted due to lockdown.

Grassroots Leadership Acknowledging Women's Stewardship



Women-led movements have within them a vast potential for influencing social change. Anjum Shaikh, who started her journey with **CORO** at the age of 21, is an instance of one such eminent leader who has raised issues of gender discrimination and violence against women within her community, sanitation, grassroots representation and rights. In **CORO**'s first webinar, in collaboration with J-PAL South Asia she shared insights about community-led intervention and her experience of community ownership, which has resulted in sustainable impact on ensuring that the people from all gender in the marginalised communities have access to free, clean, safe public/community toilets in Mumbai. Today Anjum is part of a vibrant team working on the **'Right to Pee'** campaign. To know more click [here](#).

COVID-19 Relief Update

CORO has reached 16,000 families through relief work. It has also been running helplines and offering counselling and emergency support, virtually. It has provided 2,317 masks, 1,967 gloves and 416 sanitizer cans to sanitation and health workers and toilet operators in Mumbai. 2,18,400 meals provided to urban and rural poor, Dalits, tribals, Muslims, transgender community, sex workers, single women, daily wage labourers, etc. Provided PPE kits to 6,500 sanitation workers.

Leading Response through the Crisis

'I got to know about the Coronavirus in a meeting in the village and then I decided to raise awareness and do relief work' mentions Pushpa Devi, Adhikar Sakhi from Kersoli village of Rajasthan who has been associated with **Ibtada** from last four years; and has pro-actively been working towards upliftment and empowerment of women in her village. Despite initial resistance from the local village leaders as well as her husband, she has worked at the forefront consistently defying all the odds against her. Facilitating access to small loans from a community fund for supporting their businesses, she has been assisting them to cope with the financial impact of the pandemic. Read more about her journey in the article by the South China Morning Post [here](#).



COVID-19 Relief Update

Ibtada has collected 303 quintals of wheat through grain bank and helped 2,200 households with ration kits. Over 20,000 masks were made and distributed by Adhikar Sakhis and fellows. It has helped 200 villages ensuring work rights under MNREGA scheme and enabled 500 people, mostly women to get employed.

Virtual Spaces for Support

The work of **Sanjog** and **Jan Sahas** have been featured in the **Forbes online magazine**, that highlights interesting insights from their initiatives which are helping their communities deal with the pandemic.

Kolkata-based Uma Chatterjee, the founder of Sanjog, has been connecting with survivors who because of the lockdown have had psycho-traumatic triggers of the days they have been kidnapped and trafficked. She shares her experience and challenges in providing support to these survivors in post COVID world. Read the complete article [here](#).



Bahadur Singh Ahirwal narrates his experience of operating the migrant labour helpline of Jan Sahas and describes the witnessed shift in the patterns of help being sought by the labourers before the pandemic and at present. Tracking the needs of this invisible workforce through attending around 700-900 calls per day, it has galvanised immediate support for those in extreme need. Click [here](#) to read through this article.



Enabling Awareness of Employment Opportunities: Jan Sahas



The Central Government has launched the **'Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan'** to boost livelihood opportunities for the returning migrant workers and rural citizens in the pandemic across 116 districts of six states of India (Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Orissa). It will involve intensified and focused implementation of 25 different types of work to provide jobs and create infrastructure in the rural regions of the country with a resource envelope of INR 50,000 crore.

Our partner NGO **Jan Sahas** has launched an awareness and facilitation drive of the scheme in 62 districts of 6 states with 40 local CBOs and CSOs. The NGOs' Village volunteers called 'Jan Saathis' fully equipped with PPE kits, and training of the Scheme will reach out to communities and groups through community-friendly printed posters (in local language), audio and video materials. A 24*7 national toll-free helpline will be instituted to provide information to the migrant workers.

COVID-19 Relief Update

Jan Sahas has provided ration support to 1,79,320 individuals in 62 districts and 13 states. It has provided cooked food to 1,24,000 migrant workers. 19,380 individuals have been supported by mobile recharge and balance transfer. They have provided a total of 18,432 safety kits and 9,845 PPE kits. 1,248 individuals and 985 survivors were provided psychosocial support.

Let's Hear these Voices: Shaheen



'How far can I go?' expresses Jameela Nishat, founder of **Shaheen** through her published poem on **WOMAWORDS Literacy Press, June 2020 edition- 'Imagining Life After the Ravaging, Virulent COVID-19 Pandemic'**. She takes us through her perspectives of life during the pandemic and how she envisions the future. Read the full poem [here](#).

20-year old Pooja who currently works with Shaheen; hails from the scavenger community and is a survivor of child sexual abuse. In the third episode of podcast by Suno India - **"Pinjra Tod Kar"**, she talks about the prevalence of this social evil and how we need to gear ourselves to fight the same. Listen to her through this [podcast](#).



COVID-19 Relief Update

Shaheen has been conducting awareness programs on COVID-19 by circulating flyers and pamphlets in schools and public places. Keeping the needs of the women and their households in mind, the team has curated two types of kits - a Medical/Sanitary Kit and a Ration Kit. The ration was distributed to the families of 250 young urban women and the hygiene kit has been distributed among 500 women. Shaheen has been reaching out to these victims of gender violence, counselling through telephonic conversations, and providing emotional and mental support.