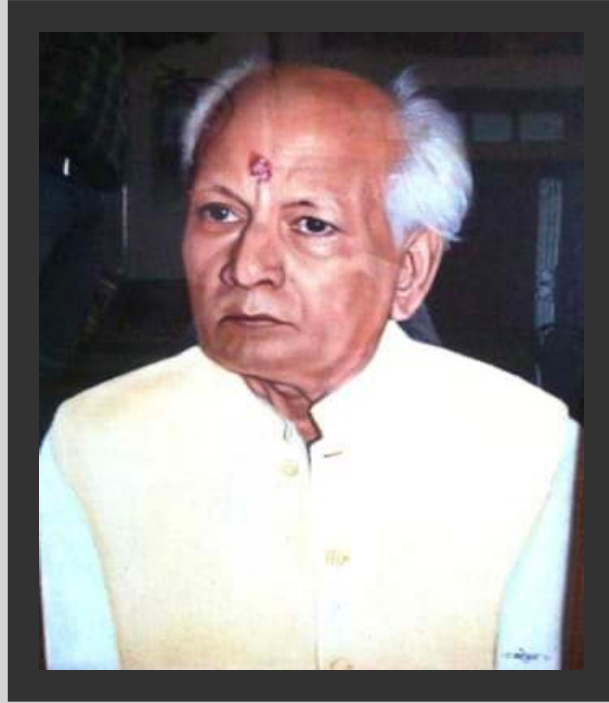




Interventions during **COVID-19**



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An Introduction

Established on 9th November 1989 in the fond memory of famous Litterateur and renowned poet Late Dr. Shambhunath Singh, the Research Foundation was registered on 31st December 1991 under Societies Registration Act. Active in every sphere of development, the organization is mainly devoted to the upliftment of disadvantaged sections of society, downtrodden, children, women, landless farmers, peasants and unorganized sector laborers in Mirzapur & Varanasi regions of eastern U.P.



Coronavirus Disease: A Scenario

During the COVID-19 pandemic, when the entire populace of the world is virtually confined to their homes, there are voluntary organizations, which, with help of the Government, provide relief to the those affected amidst the huge outcry across the country. The SRF is such an organization which has made access to the affected people in Varanasi and Vindhyachal regions, during the lockdown and post-lockdown phase. In our efforts, we are thankful to our allies, such as Child Rights & You (CRY), Plan India, Deptt of Women & Child Development Gol/GoUP, Central Social Welfare Board, Savex Technologies Pvt Ltd, Inditext info Research LLP, District and Police Administration of Varanasi & Bhadohi, representatives of local bodies and our esteemed volunteers, who wholeheartedly support us. Presented below are the some of our major interventions during Corona pandemic:

1. Contribution to Indian Red Cross Society by our Volunteers & Activists

All the functionaries and office bearers of this organization donated their one day salary to Indian Red Cross society. Cheque no 026304 and cheque number **018488** amounting to **Rs. 26,625/-** were handed over to District Magistrate of Varanasi on **09.04.2020**.



2. Relief Material Kits Distribution

Distribution of food among the vulnerable needy laborers, with support of district administration and representatives of local bodies was and always be on the top of our priority. We distributed relief material kits among 1370 most vulnerable families in 9 urban slums of Varanasi and 5000 families in 34 communities of Aurai block of Bhadohi. In view of the scourge of epidemic, our initiative was too little to reckon, so we approached several donor institutions. As a result, Savex Technologies Pvt Ltd and other individual donors came forward to help us. With their support, food packets were distributed in urban slum area of Varanasi and Aurai block of District Bhadohi. 500 packets from the consolidated fund of this organization, 131 packets with support of Sevex Technologies and with the support of local councilors, Ration Kits were distributed in remaining households.



3. Distribution of Children Snack Kits in Community

Covid 19 pandemic wrecked havoc across the whole globe, and the children are the most vulnerable among affected. Seeing the need and appreciating the child psychology, Dr. Shambhunath Singh Research Foundation along with its ally CRY, tried to reach out to children with a gift of small offerings provided by ITC. 3000 packets containing chips, biscuits, snacks, chocolates, fruits juices, etc. were distributed among the 10 urban slums of our coverage area Sonia, Meerghat, Garhiya, Ambedkarnagar, Amarpur Madhiya,





Pulkohna, Daaniyalpur, Paigambarpur, Ruppanpur, Jawahar nagar Sarnath and Kanshiram Awas yojna Shivpur. The children got these stuffs at the time they needed them the most.

4. Kits Distribution among Children and old age Homes

In addition to distribution at the community level, packets of chips, biscuits, snacks, chocolates and fruit juices were distributed among the residents of Government Children Homes (Boys), Government Children Observation Home, Ramnagar and Old Age Home at Durgakund with the active support of Mr. Praveen kumar Tripathi the Deputy Director – Women Welfare/Deputy Chief Probation Officer.

5. Eid was a mirage when people longed for the meals

When our team arrived at the urban slums of Varanasi to know the sufferings of people, it felt that the people were longing for the food, and the celebration of the ensuing festival of Eid seemed to be a mirage for them. Children belonging to the Baal Paharua, an organisation set up by us, told that the regular jobs at their household had come to a halt and there were no proceeds from anywhere to celebrate their festival Eid. These young children touched our minds so deeply that our management immediately interacted with some of its most important well-wishers and requested to extend their hands for support. The Inditext info Research LLP Company came forward and provided 800 packets of Eidy gifts which were distributed among the children of the Muslim community as the gift of festival Eid. These packets comprised of the Sewaiees and other stuffs of the desire of the children.



6. Counseling of adolescent Girls and Distribution of Hygiene Kits

Expectations from some near and dear ones grow during the lockdown period. The adolescent girls in the intervention area reported that the medical shops were closed, and their houses did not have the clean and cotton clothes. Although they were aware of the menstrual hygiene, there is little they could have done when resources for the same were scarce. On their request, 2500 hygiene kits were made, comprised of 4 sanitary pad packets, two soaps; three masks and distributed among 2013 adolescent girls in Bhadohi and 487 in Urban slums of Varanasi. Besides, 95 recycle sanitary pads were also distributed in three urban slums of Ruppanpur, Amarpur & Danialpur.





7. Distribution of PPE Kits and Masks for Health Workers

200 P.P.E. kits and N-95 masks for health workers and ambulance drivers were handed over to the District Magistrate and the Chief Medical Officer in district Bhadohi. Apart from this, 700 Aanganwari and ASHA workers under project coverage area were provided with double layer masks and soaps through Medical Officer – in charge and CDPO of Aurai.



8. Distribution of Masks for Aanganwari Workers

In view of the difficulties faced by the Aanganwari workers, 900 masks were handed over to them through the Chief Development Officer Mr. Madhusudan Hulgi and District Program Officer (ICDS) Mr. Iftikhar Ahmad. Similarly, 500 masks were made available to the supervisors and Aanganwari workers of urban area through International athlete, brand ambassador of Swachha Bharat Mission, Beti bachao Beti Parhao and Election Commission Mrs Neelu Mishra. In addition, all the seven volunteers were provided one packet of masks each (7X50). Furthermore, household distribution of masks among 450 families was done at community level, and 50 masks were made available to newly appointed USHA workers. 19 Aanganwari workers belonging to intervention area were also provided 50 masks each.



9. Direct Interventions for child protection and violence against women

During the lockdown period, people were choking in their homes, which had a particular impact on women and children. Whenever incidents of domestic violence, child abuse, child marriage and others came to our notice, they were intervened with our Family Counseling Centre conducted by Central Social Welfare board.



10. Information collection about migrants and their linkage with suitable Schemes

The migrants who have been scattered in other regions have also reached out with the support of our team. In 9 urban slums of Varanasi, 88 migrant families have returned back. They comprise of 11 children and their information was collected. Registrations in urban slums were placed before the Monitoring Committee.



11. Spread of Awareness on Government schemes and linkages

i. Ration Cards to the underprivileged

Since the pre-lockdown phase, our activists and volunteers have been continuously trying to reach the community with an eye on various government schemes for the welfare of the labourers, artisans and other people in need. When it came out that the people without ration cards, were not entitled to get any ration, our activists and volunteers acted promptly and applied for 200 ration cards. And so far, 32 income certificates have been made and the process for making ration cards is going on. Technical assistance in the process of getting the ration cards is also being provided.



ii. Weavers Welfare Scheme

Under Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Yojna, weavers and laborers belonging to stalled Sari business are entitled to get Rs 1000/ per month in their accounts for three months. 154 forms have been filled up under this scheme.



iii. Unorganised Labourers Welfare Scheme

Under this scheme, 1250 forms were filled up in Ward -12. With the active support of our team and members of Alert Group, direct benefits have been sanctioned to the 250 beneficiaries in urban slum of Pulkohna. They are getting Rs 1000/ per month.

iv. Scheme for the grant of marriage

Under this scheme, marriage grant forms of eight girls were filled up. These girls will get a lump sum amount of Rs 30,000/ each after their marriage. Their marriages were proposed during the m/o June'2020. This scheme is proving to be an effective tool against child marriage.



v. Baal Shram Vidya Dhan Yojana

While launching the Baal Vidya Shram Yojna on 12th June Hon'ble Chief Minister interacted with the selected children from 75 districts and the organisations working with them through Video Conferencing. A 12 years old son of a deceased crematorium worker Late Amrit lal Chaudhari, who had got himself engaged in his traditional business instead of going to school, was encouraged to go to school and Additional labour Commissioner was directed to take care of the child. Under this scheme, 25 children have been identified by this organisation.

12. Quarantine Centre for abandoned Children

The open shelter home which is conducted with the support of the Directorate of Women Welfare is being used as a quarantine centre for the children in 11-18 years age group, in pursuance to directions of the UP Government. Therein, two children from Agra are residing and a child from Bihar has been handed over to his family.



13. Children in need get help through Indico in APP & other social media

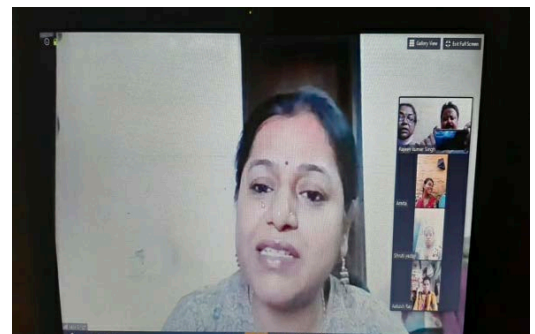
SRF believes in the securing child protection through children participation. The first children CBO in Uttar Pradesh named Baal Pahua is formed by the SRF. It is a network of 5000 children in age group 6 to 18 years. During the first wave of pandemic, an Indi coin app, based on block chain technique helped the children develop and boost their self confidence. Using this app, children in need are getting help and support. During the pandemic, nearly 800 children put forth their needs and created resources to fulfil their demand for nutritional kits and educational support, on this INDICOIN App.



Some Innovations

1. Webinar of adolescent girls with UP Commission for Protection of Child Rights

When the voice of the successful daughters by virtue of the strength of digital technology while addressing to their circumstances in slums reached to Smt. Jaya Singh, Hon'ble member of the State Child protection Commission, she expressed her willingness to webinar with these daughters and spoke directly to them. In the course of conversation, the girls apprised them of problems they experienced during lockdown, such as their education, health, hygiene, domestic violence, sexual harassment, cyber bullying, and got the assurance for positive action. Hon'ble member directed this organization to submit a memorandum based on the suggestions received from these girls. Most of the demands were conceded by the government following the directions issued by the Hon'ble Commission, which included the option of online education, door-to-door distribution of the ration under ICDS and MDM schemes, and distribution of sanitary pads to adolescent girls.



2. Formation of WhatsApp Group “Shaktipari” for the resolution of the problems of adolescent girls

We are working on the children rights issue in urban slums of Varanasi. At present, the COVID-19 pandemic has shaken the entire world. The situation has become especially devastating for those who live in economic hardships. In association with our ally, an organization named Lakshmi Bai Shakti Patri Samooh has been formed among the adolescent girls in slums. These girls, facing their own challenges are moving ahead, becoming a source of inspiration to others. Even in the lockdown period, when all are imprisoned in their homes, the young boys in the house openly go out to play in the streets, all sort of restrictions have increased upon the girls. In this situation, digital training and art of communication imparted to the girls worked. 70 girls belonging to different 9 urban slums have created a WhatsApp group named Shakti pari. 70 adolescent girls are directly linked through 42 telephone numbers, and this number is increasing gradually. These adolescents are identifying the problems at the level of their homes and slums and sharing thoughts with each other through video-conferencing, messaging, etc. As a result, they have found ways to solve most of their problems themselves. Seeing this unique initiative, today, we can say “Where there is a will, there is a way.” The SRF-CRY has shown only the way, they are leading towards their destination themselves.



3. Telecounseling

When all were imprisoned in their homes during the lockdown, it was only the telephone which provided suitable opportunity to connect to the community. Telecommunication was conducted in three phases under a strategy. In the first phase, there was a dialogue on Corona epidemic and its prevention. The second phase was in the context of various government schemes and toll free numbers. The third phase was devoted particularly to the education of children and helping them to overcome the depression, caused by various reasons. In context of the above three references, there was telecounseling for community problems, participated by a total of 1560 people including 1100 adults , 250 adolescent girls and 210 children.



4. Community friendly Policing

During the lockdown, on calm roads and in the tranquility of streets, social workers felt that it was time to connect directly to the community and become an active partner in their needs. But, in curfew-like situation, it was difficult for everyone to get out of their homes. In this situation, representative of this organization met and called upon Mr. Braj Bhushan ADG, Police Varanasi Zone and appraised him of the problems being faced in Urban slums of Varanasi telling him that our volunteers not only needed the pass but the cooperation of the police administration too. Because, if in the situation of prevailing starvation in slums, our volunteers go there to distribute the food stuffs, they would not only be violating the advisory of social distancing but might face an unruly mob too. The ADG directed Sri. Arjun Singh, CO Circle in charge of Police Public Annapurna Service, who came to the office of this organization and launched the service. The Varanasi police provided their full support, became partners in our efforts as volunteers, on open roads and inside the streets. Similarly, on the direction of District Magistrate, Bhadohi, the police personnel of Aurai police station also extended their full support for one week in distribution of ration and hygiene kits.



5. Children Creativity Manifest during Lockdown

During the lockdown the children utilized the time of their stay in homes in a better way and manifested their creativity through poetry, storytelling, painting, video clips etc. On inspiration of this organization, the children drove their paint brushes on diverse issues such as preventive measures on Coronavirus epidemic, environment, side effects of drugs, importance of education, Child rights exploitation, menstrual hygiene etc. Which were disseminated on WhatsApp groups and other social media platforms, receiving wide appreciation.



6. Hand wash without touch

Messages from the media to repeatedly wash the hands with soap and water, without touching the Tap directly, inspired the children in remote villages and urban slums to discover an innovative way of hand wash while in games and also inspired the community to wash their hands with soap and water.





7. Establishment of smart classes and remedial evening classes in slum

SRF has felt the importance of on line education in the years to come. In collaboration with its ally partner, CRY (Child Rights & You) digital board for the smart classes has been setup in Primary School, Ghausabad (I) and Kasturba Gandhi Awaseey Balika Vidyalay, Sarnath. Training to the teachers has been arranged through Next Education Pvt Ltd. Besides, the volunteers of CRY America have been providing regularly online tuitions to five children in our intervention area. At Digital Learning Centre, Paigambarpur, in collaboration with the teachers of the primary school, a remedial class is being held which is regularly attended by 25 learners.



8. All India Radio & other international media highlighted the initiatives

On 13 June 2020, at 11.30 a.m. the Vividh Bhaarat channel of All India Radio, Varanasi (FM 100.6) broadcasted the interview of Mr. Rajeev Kumar Singh, Chief Functionary and General Secretary of the SRF on the topic "COVID-19 and Society". It was an innovative idea to use the mass media to reach the masses to spread the message of the SRF on its strategy to combat and contain the pandemic COVID-19. Links for media channels are given below-



- <https://swachhindia.ndtv.com/international-womens-day-2021-adolescent-girls-in-varanasi-slums-overcome-lack-of-sanitary-pads-during-covid-19-lockdown-57099/?fbclid=IwAR3bzFhuc43rcI9egrXWYjpMJ373noBaliJdjFSO-zBkhWU0ou3CB-tUy50>
- https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/11/05/931274119/child-marriages-are-up-in-the-pandemic-heres-how-india-tries-to-stop-them?utm_campaign=storyshare&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=social&fbclid=IwAR3PJ-SiH3vUYhobJ4KFs-jExBFfpnTVshUnV3Xn-vIU-qlJI5FeJMFlohA
- https://news.trust.org/item/20200811231237-svn98/?fbclid=IwAR3ZnCzaC_r7EsmYwUiaZmEoKC_AkKIk7qdFExEMmzbeKXNqvw-uVu1EXAI
- <https://www.google.co.in/amp/s/amp.france24.com/en/20200901-virus-despair-forces-girls-across-asia-into-child-marriage>



Advocacy

1. With State Government

With the beginning of Lockdown various suggestions, letters, emails, IGRS, and twits, were sent to Hon'ble Chief Minister, other ministers and senior officers for the relief and prevention of Coronavirus. In many cases, prompt actions and policy decisions were taken.

2. With UP state Commission for protection of child Rights

In order to share various problems of children and adolescent girls, a webinar was organized in order to have a dialogue with Smt Jaya Singh, an Hon'ble member of the SCPCR. A detailed report in this regard was sent to her, and it was followed up through a letter on Child marriage too.

3. With District Administration

Migrants in Varanasi city were being quarantined directly in their homes instead of the community buildings. The SRF team recognised the menace and raised the question how people living in tin shades and slums could maintain the protocol of home quarantine or isolation, while they themselves do not have the proper space to live in their homes. It was detrimental to their own health apart from being hazardous to others who happened to come into contact with them. It was leading to social distancing and community conflict as they were unable to make for a separate arrangement due to their sudden return. The administration was, therefore, requested that all the migrants coming from outside should be kept in government facilities with the entire process for 14 days, meeting their basic needs outside, and, then allowing them to stay with their families in their homes.

4. With Women Welfare Department

In context of the Child Marriage, Child abuse and domestic violence during the lockdown period, dialogue was initiated with the District Probation Officer. Discussion was also held with Child Protection Officer to avail the ration and other facilities for 10 children selected under sponsorship scheme. Taking up the matter seriously, relief material was provided to the families of 10 sponsored children. On request of the District Probation Officer, kits comprising of the materials of child interest were distributed in Government Children Home (Boys), Government Observation Home (Boys) and Government Old Age Home.

5. With Child Welfare Committee (CWC)

Due care was taken of children in shelter homes, quarantine centers, etc. There were communications to provide for quarantine arrangement under special protocols to the children found to be lost from outside during COVID-19 Pandemic. The Open Shelter Home run by this organization in collaboration with the Department of Women's Welfare is being operated as quarantine centre for the destitute children of 11-18 years.

6. With Police Department

During the lockdown, there was talks with the police department on issue of child marriage, child abuse and domestic violence. It was assisted in community policing too.



7. With Department of Education

Recommendations were done to the BSA for the re-enrollment of 189 dropouts and the children who had never been to school. A list was prepared and handed over to them. Lives of the poor people have been completely cut off from the education. Option of online education was merely an empty formality of the department of education. As soon as we came to know that enrollments were being done online, coordinating with the headmasters and the Basic Education Officer and adhering to the norms of social distancing, children residing in vicinity of schools were called in schools, and after their enrollments text books were also given to them.

8. With Department of Health

Lobbying with the department of health was also done in order to provide emergency support to patients found to be suffering from diseases other than COVID-19. Essential items such as PPE Kits, masks and sanitizers were also distributed to them.

9. With Department of Labour

There was lobbying with department of labour on the issues pertaining to the interest of the migrant laborers, Baal shram Vidyadhan Yojana and other government schemes.

10. With Nagar Nigam and Deptt of Labour in context of migrant workers

A list of 88 migrant families under project coverage area in Varanasi district and 700 families in Bhadohi District has been handed over to District administration for further action.



Current Scenario & Urgent Requirements

At present, COVID-19 infection is growing rapidly due the commencement of livelihood activities in unlock phase. In this situation, all of our activists and volunteers are on full alert and continuously monitoring the social, economic and psychotic situation of community sections in order to to provide them all possible assistance. With our scant resources and a team of dedicated volunteers we are trying to reach to the masses with following designs in our minds:

1. To grant free-of-cost ambulance services, equipped with life saving devices.
2. To provide ventilation beds at charity hospitals affiliated with this organization to make them accessible to the poor and others in need.
3. To supply 10 portable oxygen concentrators in order to meet the urgent oxygen needs of home-isolated patients, struggling for their lives.
4. 100 Oximeters, Ambu bags and Thermometers to be provided among the poor and needy on rotation basis.
5. To provide COVID medicine kits to 1000 patients for 14 days containing medicines such as Ivermectine, Azithromycine, Doxycycline, Paracetamol, Vitamin C and Zinc Tablets, etc.
6. 10,000 triple layer masks must be distributed free of cost among the most vulnerable communities.
7. To supply needy families with one month ration to 1000 through ration kits containing 10 kg flour, 10 kg rice, 2 kg pulses, 1 kg gram, oil , spices, salts, onion, potatoes, etc.
8. To grant 100 budget tablets for distance education and spread awareness to the most marginalized children and their families.

We appeal to your sense of community and charity to contribute in cash or kind to alleviate the suffering of humanity during these immensely tragic times. You are most welcome, if willing to volunteer, as a Doctor or Counselor too. Your contribution shall be utilized in a very transparent manner and we assure you to revert even a single penny back to you in the form of the breathings of the suffering humanity. Donation to the organization is exempted under section 80(G) of Income Tax Act.