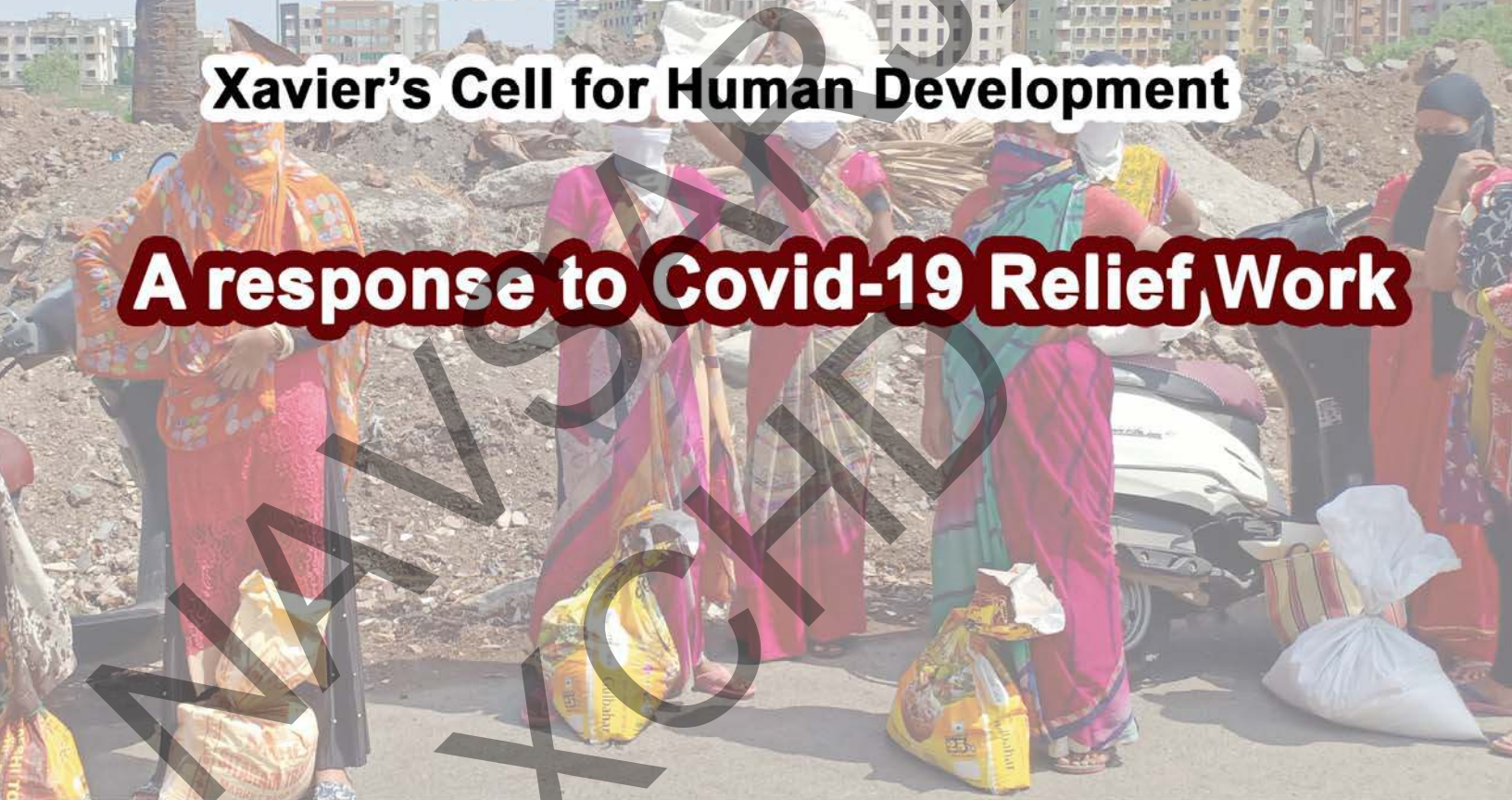




NAVSARJAN

Xavier's Cell for Human Development

A response to Covid-19 Relief Work



Near R.T.O., Ring Road, Surat-395001. Gujarat, India, Ph:+91-2612475683,247226
Email:navsarjansurat1986@gmail.com, www.navsarjan-surat.org



NAVSARJAN
XCHD



Covid-19 Relief Work Team



Core Team

Malti Pawar		Sangita Thakur
Malti Patel		Sangita Patel
Sunita Panpatil		Sunil Vatas
Ratan Jadav		Seven Rajput
Samir Macwan		Dr. James Dabhi
Fr. Rajeev Chakranarayan sj		

Supportive Team

Dilu Kamalbhai Darji	Manishaben More	Heena Shaikh
Mamta Menaria	Sangeetaben Sonvane	Sahilkumar Patel
Daxaben Patel	Maltiben Tamboli	Payalben Gamit
Urmilaben D. Chauhan	Anjali Santoshbhai Selar	Rajesh Vasaiya
Tabassum Ansari	Amishaben Macwana	Vikash Rokade
Rathod Godavariben S.	Mahisara M. Rajput	Vinaykumar Jadav
Mohini Menaria	Joyceben S. Jerome	Baviskar Vijaybhai
Hemangini M. Damor	Sunitaben Sahadur Nishad	Ranjan Solanki
Shobha C. Lasure	Ashaben Pawar	Maltiben Gamit
Sanjay Gamit	Mahemood Shaikh	

Report Prepared By

Sunil Vatas, Sahil Patel, Samir Macwan

Design by


Samir Macwan

Published by

Fr. Rajeev Chakarnarayan s.j.

Executive Director

Navsarjan, Xavier's Cell for Human Development



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Introduction

"You can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one."

- St. Mother Teresa of Kolkata.



Covid.19. Pandemic has done havoc in the world and chaos in taking away human lives. At the same time there have emerged thousands of people doing great service to save human lives who have become prey to the predator CORONA virus. Millions of those self-sacrificing, individuals, families, groups, communities, associations, agencies, institutions, trusts, societies, civil service organizations and NGOs have become COVID.19 warriors in various ways of relief works besides warriors the medical profession. NAVSARJAN too plunged into this warfare of pushing away the COVID-19-Pandemic & the criticalities of lockdown through relief task and thus to save lives in the Surat city slums from hunger and starvation.

NAVSARJAN.Xavier's Cell for Human Development, (NXCHD) was established in 1986 under the Bombay Public Trust Act of 1950 and works under the aegis of Gujarat Province of the Society of Jesus. The meaning of NAVSARJAN is the "new creation".

The organization has been playing the role of creating the atmosphere of responsibility in case of Urban Local Governance & development. It follows the right based approach in its interventions. However, depending upon the situation it also takes the charity and the developmental approaches. Navsarjan accompanies communities in the process of empowerment through CBOs where people have the opportunity to realize their own potential, rights as citizens and contribute to wellbeing of themselves and others in the community.

The organization through the community and the leaders works towards inclusive development and fundamental/human rights of the marginalized of city.


NAVSARJAN pays a special attention to women, children, migrant & the unorganized labourers for their empowerment and entitlements.

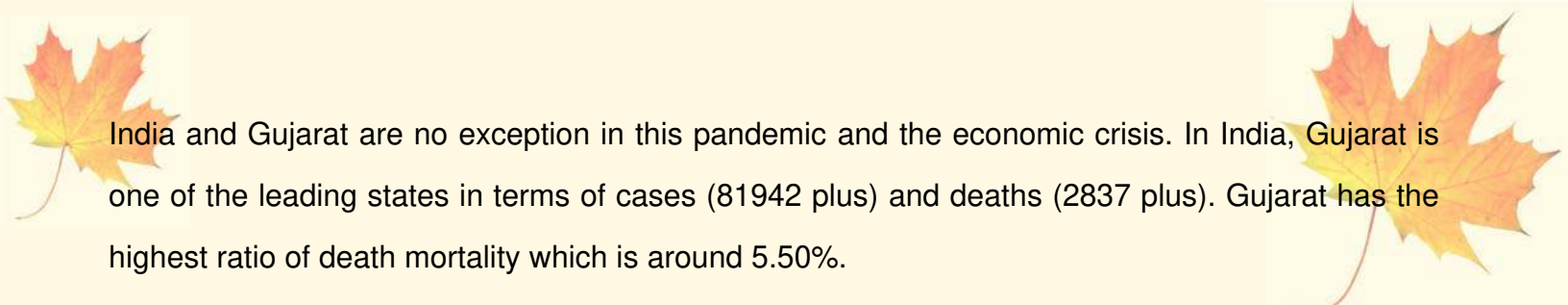
Our strategy is the education of the children, community mobilization along with the community based organizations (CBOs) and to make people to represent/ assert for their fundamental rights of food, shelter, clothing, health, education & employment. Following dimensions are embedded in our intervention design.

Covid-19-Pandemic Situation in India

The world has witnessed an unprecedented health crisis. In the month of July 9th 2020, the website of WHO has reported total 22,598,225 confirmed cases in the **world** & total 791,299 deaths. The website of WHO has also reported total 2,841,337 confirmed cases in **India** and total 54017 deaths. The number of a

[https:// www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/](https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/)
<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/india/>





India and Gujarat are no exception in this pandemic and the economic crisis. In India, Gujarat is one of the leading states in terms of cases (81942 plus) and deaths (2837 plus). Gujarat has the highest ratio of death mortality which is around 5.50%.

Surat being industrial city, after Ahmedabad it is the second highly affected city in Gujarat. Surat has more than 6313 cases till date and 242 deaths. Due to diamond and textile industry Surat has high rate of migration. People from other states of India come here in search of work. 85% of the Surat city is migrated population.

Covid-19-Pandemic Situation In Slums of Surat

1. About General Public.....

The fear of spread of CORONA virus was in the air at the global level and consequently the lockdown announced by the Government on March 23, 2020 with no prior warning or preparation for large section of people who are daily wage earners, seasonal migrants and semi - permanent labourers.

The nature of a livelihood and the remuneration are meagre and they do not allow them to have a stock for household grocery and the essential to be stock for more than a couple of days or a week at the most. Their financial saving if any is minimum. These people were the worst hit by the lockdown.

The Public Distribution System (social security provided monthly) covering people below and around poverty line had problem and the grain provided was not adequate.

For administration it appeared that they viewed this as “law and order” situation and therefore the heavy handedness of police was on the ordinary people who came out for their essential household requirements.

During the 2nd and 3rd phase the daily wage earners, the seasonal and the semi- permanent migrant laborers became desperate. It led to the public protest, beating up by police and the vehicle confiscation etc.

The infection and the health situation became worse by weeks and days later on. After Ahmedabad city Surat city had the highest number of COVID-19 cases and the deaths as well. The ‘testing’ were few and hospital facilities were not adequate.

2. About Children



During this playing they did not maintain social distance and some of them did not wear mask.

The schools and colleges, rather the entire education system is still shut.

The government schools had announced that they would provide the e-education on the national television channel. Some of the school teachers gave the learning material to the parents to provide online education to their children. In slums some parents (30%) had smart phones but most of the parents (70 %) did not or the parents were illiterate.

The Impact of Lockdown: ...

Sudden declared or imposed lock-down has put all the migrant workers in big trouble. They had to defend themselves from the CORONA virus and to survive without salary or the inflow of income. A huge population has been left out from what was promised in terms of cash transfer and grain from PDS system. The large slum population of Surat slum consist of daily wage earners and unorganized labourers.



The Selection & Distribution Process of Relief Kits.....

Navsarjan approached the local public authority with a letter and applied for exemption passes during the lock-down. We could get 10 passes for people and 5 passes for the relief vehicles. We decided that we would take the help of local CBOs/ leaders to get the list of needy people.

With the help of the local women leaders of the CBOs in the areas, a list of vulnerable persons were prepared which included widows, destitute families, differently abled people, elderly. Once they were identified & list prepared, each one of them was given a coupon before hand.

Highlights of Covid-19 Relief Work

Ration Kit Distribution

- ◆ More than 3671 grocery kit were distributed to needy families in 37 slum area of Surat.
- ◆ More than 600 widows, elderly persons, disabled and helpless families were given two times ration kits so they can live dignify life.

Food distribution

With some personal contact we could manage to get **150 packed meals for 15 days for the vulnerable ones.**

Our staff used to collect those packets and distribute to the needy in the areas every day.





Health and Hygienic

- ♦ **2100 Masks were distributed in slums.**
- ♦ **1500 Hand Sanitizers were distributed in slums.**
- ♦ **3671 people made aware of Covid-19 disease, Social Distancing and hand wash**

Work in timeline.....

From 20th March to 14th April 2020 Our first responsibility was to get out the orphans children to a safe place and ensure that they were secured and fed in. Under street children program we have placed 15 children to one of the residential schools and hostel in Kamrage. They came back due to lockdown. Our of 15 children 7 children are put back with their family. 8 children are orphan. One of our staff Mr. Ashwin has been taking care of them from very first day.

We had our WhatsApp conference with number of staff about how was the situation in their area and the areas they work in and had done need assessment of the people and the area both in terms of health status and food situation.

In our first telephonic assessment, we estimated about 5000 families requiring assistance.

On 30th March 2020, we wrote to the Deputy commission, contact we got through our adv. Pratik Sharma, and got 10 passes for people and 5 passes for vehicles to be used during curfew for relief.

Meanwhile we made an appeal for support to provide some relief to the civil society. We even got some responses and so donation. Provide Financial Support to 23 ragpicker women's group.

we decided that we shall not distribute anything but will support people and local administration in distribution in the area through talking to ration shops owners and women leaders in the slums.

With the help of the local women leaders and Area leaders' staff had started to monitor the PDS Shops. Staff had ensuring that people had the information and got what was announced by Government. However, we realised that it was not received as announced by the administration. We also realised that what was given was not adequate for a family of 5 people.

We received call from various areas for help because they have no food for eat in lockdown situation. Our Staff followed up that help had reached where needed.



From 15th April to 30th June 2020 Our staff met on 15th April to take stock of the situation of the slums. We took following decisions:

We provide a small ration kit to all the saving and credit cooperative women, which numbers about 2000. These families will be covered through cash donation received from friends mentioned above.

We shall cover very poor slums through the kits given by St. Xavier's School and Lourdes Convent School. We were able to cover 1250 families through these two schools.

Distribution of Kits as under.....

Month	Number of Kits
15 th April – May 2020	2100
June 2020	1571
Total	3671

NAVSARJAN supports NAVCHETNA women's Association working in nearly 24 slums in their empowerment process through entitlement, human rights awareness as well as education (tuition classes, dropout children education and computer classes), and livelihood (tailoring) activities. The women's association has nearly 20 local teachers who help in education. Their remuneration is met by contribution from students, women's association and NAVSARJAN. NAVSARJAN committed to take care of these teachers by paying them at least Rs.3000/- for month of April, May and June-2020



Challenges we faced:

1. Volunteering staff, their safety and safety of their Families – we got 10 permit passes for relief and gave them to the volunteering staff.
2. Movement of teams had to be well routed to cover maximum areas in particular period of time as we had permit for only 5 vehicles. Our staff was obliging and they lend their vehicles for relief work.
3. No quick delivery from Traders and fluctuating prices made purchase and distribution schedule inconvenient for people. The women leaders in the area were very helpful in adjusting the schedule and calling women for distribution accordingly.
4. Keeping physical distance in the area was a challenging task as in number of place people were desperate to receive relief. We provided mask for every person who came to collect the relief and insisted on physical distance and covering their faces.
5. In three places were positive cases of corona were found, distribution was challenging. Police was helpful in giving us necessary access to reach the place and provide the relief.
6. The strong sun and lack of open shaded place during distribution was taxing for our women and staff.
7. Internal conflict and division in a few places were echoed during distribution and it was unpleasant.

Conclusion.

Predator is still around voracious feeding itself in taking away the breath of human being across the globe. How long it will be there Almighty alone knows. But one thing is sure that the paradox of fear and service has taught one lesson to human beings across the world that nothing is important than one's one life. Hence in order to save own life one must remain at home, keep safe distance, keep self and surrounding clean & most importantly give time, affection to family and be grateful to those warriors who risked their lives during the Pandemic to save others.

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

- Mahatma Gandhi



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Our Partners



Well-wishers

from

National and International Level