

Dear Friends,



This has been a difficult time for all of us, but has become a matter of daily survival with an unsurety of the next meal for lakhs of people in every nook and corner of the country. The working-class family is typically in debt with years of impoverishment from before, and eat what they earn each day. Thus the lockdown has put everyone who has been part of the unorganized sector, in vulnerable positions.

Muskaan has been providing relief to the families most affected by the lockdown from Day 1. Initially reaching to 2000 families with whom we were working with from before, today, 3 weeks later, we are covering about 4500 families across different parts of the city, and many more individual households from where the identified need is high.

How have we been doing this.. usually done in three steps -

a) Fund Raising

We have been able to do this because of people like you. We get donations on a daily basis and the collection is also used up by the end of the day. People donate for families @ Rs. 700 per family per week.

We've also received donations in kind where grain, oil and fresh produce have been collected/ sent to out 4 storage points across the city. Some have given us vehicles for distributions.

Different voluntary groups like Madhya Pradesh Mahila Manch (MPMM), students and individuals have helped make contact with wholesalers, in distribution, in making lists of households in critical need and with putting pressure on government functionaries to begin PDS and other distribution systems so more people can avail of rations at this time.

b) Procurement of Food Items

We procure rations - wheat-flour, rice, pulses, oil and vegetables and eggs.

This has often been a challenge, with limited stocks available with wholesalers.

We've been supported immensely by the farm produce and direct purchase of dry rations for us by people who have come forward.

c) Reaching people in real need

1. Shahri Mazdoor Sangathan is a network of working-class people from different communities. Many depend on waste-picking for their earning while others work on construction sites while still others do daily wage work in different small service sectors especially repairs and maintenance. Members of the Sangathan identify households in critical need.

2. We have also approached settlements where people are living in open shanties, seasonal migrants who have come from different districts - all of who are dependent on daily income. They have given us requirements for their areas and also connected us with other members of their communities who are living in clusters elsewhere in the city.

3. Sometimes, the ICDS workers, with whom we were working earlier, approach us for needs in their areas.

4. Additionally, like minded, concerned citizens have called to inform us about groups/ settlements in and around their localities to whom they want to help reach rations.

All of these people send us a list of vulnerable families which has been made at the community level, and we provide them the rations.

How do we give - Distribution is done at a specific time, usually early in the morning. Rations are delivered to a pre-decided point near the settlement. 2-3 members from the community collect the rations and deliver it to the households. Efforts are made to minimise physical interaction and exposure. In larger settlements, the rations are distributed lane by lane through volunteers from each lane collecting the required quantity and delivering door to door. The entire distribution happens through a chain of volunteers in as safe a manner as possible.

What do we give - We try to give weekly rations. This means 5 kg of rice, 5 kg of aata, 2 kg of daal and 1 litre oil for a family. If weekly stocks are not available with us, we need to make more frequent trips to the bastis. We have been adding vegetables or fruits or eggs when we can where we can.

We look forward to your support as we get into the second week of the lock down, which is impacting people very hardly. Please donate in cash or kind. Our bank details are -

Account Name: Muskaan; A/c No.: 920010013403548

IFSC: UTIB0002659

Bank: Axis Bank; Branch: Nehru Nagar, Bhopal

Thank you,

Seema (9827302869); Pallav (9424917757)

Note - All donations to Muskaan are tax-exempt under Section 80G.

