

ASHA HANDICRAFTS ASSOCIATION

REPORT ON FOOD DONATION DRIVE FOR ARTISANS DURING COVID 19

The update from here in India is that, we are in middle of a complete national lockdown since 25th March till 17th May due to infectious disease “**Corona Virus**”. Till 3rd May the lockdown was quite strong enough where except for the essential services everything was standstill. I think this was the only possible option we had as a nation. Currently we have seen a sudden spike in the positive cases in last few weeks wherein the number has reach above 60,000 positive cases in which about 2,000 are death cases. From 3rd May onwards, the whole nation has been divided into 3 zones (Green, Orange & Red) and lockdown has been ease out to certain extend. Our government is doing its best along with its various agencies, civil society organization with whatever resources it has and hopes the situation will get under control soon.

Since Asha’s work involved working with more than 800 artisans across the county, it brought us to the attention of the need of many artisans working on daily wages. The first two weeks of lockdown from 25th March till 7th April was not a big concern, but when government extended the lockdown in the second phase we were able to hear the cry of many of our artisans who were not able to sustain their families as their daily income has been affected due to COVID 19 lockdown. We immediately decided to have a management meet to discuss the above concerns raised by our artisans.

As part of our work plan, Asha Resource Centre immediately planned out a strategy to identify the real need of the artisans. A small online survey & telephonic calls was carried out through our Welfare Workers to identify the number of artisans in need, their income source, number of family members and their current need for the survival. With this survey we were able to identify 282 artisans who were in immediate need of financial help to buy groceries and other food products for the survival of their family.

The implementation of distribution of financial support to these artisans was matter of concern as everything was completely lockdown. After long discussion within management of Asha staff and the producers, it was decided to transfer the funds directly in the artisan’s account who has banking details. And those who don’t have the bank accounts, our producers took initiative to buy the groceries/food products and distribute it within the artisans in their respective centers.

The project implementation started from 10th April and it took us a week to do all the distribution work. With the available budget, we were able to allocate Rs. 1500 per artisan for their basic survival need for atleast 2 to 3 weeks for a family of 5 members. This includes buying a grocery such as – 10 Kgs Rice, 1 kg Salt, 500 gms Mix Spices, 2 Litre Oil, 2 Kgs Pulses, 10 Kgs Wheat & other basic food products.

Below are the distribution details:

1. No. of Craft Centers – 9 Centers
2. No. of Producer groups – 34 Groups
3. Total No. of Artisans who received help – 282 Artisans Families
4. No. of artisans supported through bank transfer – 257 artisans families
5. No. of artisans supported through food distribution – 25 Artisans families

The above project was implemented with the allocated budget of USD 6000 (Rs. 4, 20,000) to help the artisans in the initial phase. This was only possible with the whole hearted support from Asha’s Management but also our long standing Fair Trade partners such as Shared Earth UK, ET Games UK, Elpuente Germany, Ten Thousand Villages Canada, Trades of Hope USA and other well-wishers. On behalf of all the artisans, producers and Asha’s staff we wanted to say “Thank you” and wish you all the success in all the good work you do. God Bless you all and keep you safe during this pandemic.

Restoring Hope for Artisans:



"This lockdown has prevented me from working and it has been a challenging time for my family. I was worried if we would have food to eat. The support & assistance received from Asha Handicrafts has helped us survive. It makes me feel relax as there is someone who cares for me & my family" – Naresh Kumar Sharma, Stone Artisan, Agra

"I'm a daily wage worker. Due to lockdown, I didn't had any work and hence no money to support the family. The rations (Food items) we received from Asha was the answer to our prayers. Thank you Asha for caring us" – Shakir, Wood Artisan, Saharanpur

"We have three children to feed and look after. I & my husband both are daily wage workers. With our savings in bank, we know we can manage for about a month but it could have been difficult after that. The grocery food received from Asha Handicrafts was a blessing" – Shakuntala Devi, Jewelry Artisan, Jaipur

"I have around 25 women artisans working with me who have been unable to work & earn during this lockdown. All these women's are on piece rate workers. It became hard for these artisans to feed their families with no financial support. Asha Handicrafts helped me provide them with rations (Food Items) and other necessities in these difficult times. We are all very grateful for Asha for their generosity" – Pooja Sharma, Producer Group Head, Jaipur

