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# DEEP JYOTI





Normal is passé and the new normal is all about pushing the boundaries. We had been waiting to 'control-alt-delete' 2020, and start a new in 2021. Spanning from sudden lockdown to creating new hope with array of vaccines, COVID-19 posed an extraordinary challenge for everyone. In context to food security and livelihoods, we were all exposed to harsh reality as economically vulnerable groups were left high and dry. The nature of the pandemic was unique and efforts to "flatten the curve" followed by large-scale reverse migration was like concussion. With 2021, we genuinely hope that those migrants commute hundreds of miles towards their Karmabhoomi once again. As a civil society, we will help in weaving the new hope for the helpless and hapless for building their lives again. 2021 dedicated to incredible enthusiasm and an outburst of new ideas. Here's to 365 new days and 365 new reasons to hustle.



Priya Giri Chakraborty

### WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE?

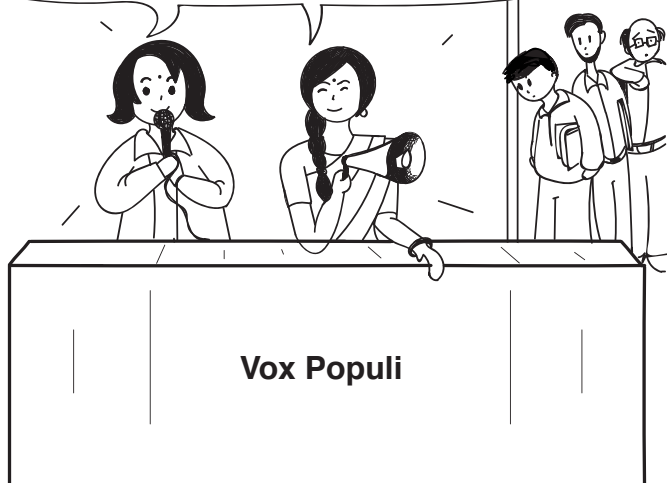
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WE CHOSE TO SPEAK TO BE ABLE TO SIT HERE!!



## Women Empowerment through Integration of Health-Livelihood-Education Services

While there are several examples of integrated village development interventions, there are only a few that aims at women empowerment through integration of interventions related to health-livelihood-education. Rural women in the villages surrounding Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) have been provided access to subsidized maternal and child care services at Deepak Medical Foundation (DMF), a 25 bed multi-specialty hospital within the vicinity of 8-10 km. A full-fledged diagnostic facility, pharmacy and occupational health centre caters to the families of industrial workers. Community-based camps are undertaken to ensure last mile reach of services.

Health-Nutrition education is an integral part of the services in hospital, household and community level for the beneficiaries (women, children and adolescent girls) of Integrated Childhood Development Schemes (ICDS) under the 67 *Anganwadi* centres (AWCs) assigned by Department of Women and Child Development, Government of Gujarat. The focus is to promote Mother and Infant Young Child Nutrition (MIYCN) and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) practices during First 1000 days of child's life to about 300 pregnant and nursing mothers registered at Anganwadi centres (AWCs). Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for 3-5 year olds is promoted through innovative methods using various educational materials at household level and refurbishment of Anganwadi centres (AWCs). Monthly tracking of 500 adolescent girls done to improve their health-nutrition. The integrated approach multiplies the benefits for the women and children leading to their comprehensive development. The program also reaches out to children who do not have access to digital medium to continue education during these difficult times and reduces the drudgery and expenses on education among mothers belonging to poor households and aspire to educate their children.

Sangaath, the facilitation centre at Deepak Medical Foundation (DMF) provides help to avail benefit of government welfare schemes like widow pension scheme, Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram (JSSK), insurance under Ayushman Bharat and others schemes. The initiative significantly helps women in getting benefit of government's social security networks.

Over 1700 women members of 108 self help groups (SHGs) are federated as Deep Jyot Mahila Cooperative Credit Society (DJMCCS) to promote savings and utilization of credit facility for initiating entrepreneurial activities. Its annual turnover is Rs. 1.87 crores. More than 1000 entrepreneurs are earning an average monthly income of about Rs. 9000, ranging from Rs 6000 to 15000 per month. Various enterprises are also promoted like quilts, paper and cloth bags making, nursery plantation and gardening through capacity building. Training on mask-making was imparted to promote COVID-19 prevention protocol in local communities as group enterprise. Over 25000 masks were sold during the year 2020-21 with a income of Rs 3000 per women per month. The benefits of integrated intervention helps to empower nearly 1500 rural women and their families annually in eleven villages surrounding Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation (GIDC) area in Nandesari, Vadodara district.



COVID-19, has disrupted the services of Anganwadi Centres jeopardized the health and nutrition of several pre-schoolers as well as pregnant and lactating mothers belonging to poor households. In order to ensure continuation of supply of supplementary nutrition in the age group of malnourished children 3-5 years (having Z score <-2 SD), Deepak Foundation initiated provision of multi-grain energy dense laddos or energy dense groundnut chikki to 250 malnourished children on regular intervals to support their nutritional requirements. Twenty-five Anganwadi centers from Angadh, Fajalpur villages and Nandesari, Vadodara district have been covered under the program. The undernourished children are given laddos 4-5 times a week (at least 15-24 laddos/month/child). The distribution is done together with Anganwadi workers keeping necessary COVID-19 prevention protocol. So far, total of 388 kilograms of multi-grain energy dense supplement in the form of ladoos/chikki has been distributed amongst 250 children. The pilot plan is to supply hot-cooked mini meals consisting of multi-flour, seasonal vegetables and a serving of curd to improve their dietary diversity to 50 children.



The parents/care-givers of these children were regularly counselled during the home visits about nutrition, food intake and improving their dietary diversity. Deepak Foundation also organized medical check-up of 250 malnourished children with support from medical team of Deepak Medical Foundation. They also received respective medicines and Ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) which are energy-dense, micro-nutrient enhanced pastes used in therapeutic feeding with key ingredients as ground-nuts.

India is home to 20 million orphans with only about 600 orphanages to care for them. Stories of neglect of children in some of the orphanages and child care institutions (CCI) are depressing and miserable. Foster care is a family based non-institutional child care program that provides substitute care for children who are abandoned, have no biological family to take care of them or are removed from their families after experiencing abuse or neglect. While the efforts are underway to deinstitutionalize children from homes to families, poverty, ignorance, socio-cultural and religious diversity and taboos remain impediments for families to come forth to take children under foster care. Not surprisingly, till the year 2019, not a single child from Gujarat's CCI was taken under foster care despite schemes and support from the govt. The first child from Samaj Suraksha Sankul, a boy's home with about 150 was taken under foster care. The district officials facilitated Gujarat's first ever foster care family when the first 14 years old was taken under foster care.



Family in Vadodara volunteered take two orphan brothers, Samaj Suraksha Sankul under Foster Care

Later, two brothers, Raju and Ravi (names changed) aged 14 and 16 years respectively from Samaj Suraksha Sankul were taken under foster care in November 2020. Raju and Ravi, were brought up in extreme poverty. Their parents passed away when they were less than 10 years old and had no opportunity to enroll in school and were under nourished when they arrived in Samaj Suraksha Sankul in 2014. The foster parents, unfortunately lost both their sons in an accident. The couple decided to fill the void by taking in two brothers under foster care. *"It is a bitter sweet feeling for the staff of Sankul when children, who have become part of our family, leave the institution. However, we know there is a bond between us and our children that will never break no matter where they go."* The nostalgic staff and govt. officials provided all necessary support and encouragement to the family after completing due diligence.





## Providing warehouse support to FPOs as a social marketing initiative:

Government's initiative granting warehouses as legal selling points is one of the major policy reforms in the long term and must successfully be implemented at ground level. It aims at reducing the transport cost and provides 15% subsidy on capital cost to individuals, companies and corporations for setting up warehouses. The support from private sector in setting up warehouses and capacity building of Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) could yield faster outcomes with regard to increasing the income from agriculture. Currently demand for warehouse is witnessing a rapid surge. Most of the warehouses are running at full capacity due to high carryover stocks and the disruption the retail and export supply chain due to lockdown. Moreover, clear evidence of success and utility of a warehouse during such crisis has been established. A private investment in establishing a "one-stop-shop warehouse" arrangement for providing services like cleaning, grading, sorting and packaging of agri. produce will considerably be beneficial to the farmers. Need based mechanized small or medium scale warehouses with a storage capacity (< 500MT) located close to the FPO will also help in reducing the operational cost. The processing and storage fee could help to make it financially sustainable.

**Supporting Marginal & Small Farmer Sell their Produce:** The amendment in farm bills has ruffled many feathers. While policies, reforms and bills are passed from time to time, the challenges remain in implementation. *"The farmer is the only man in our economy who buys everything at retail, sells everything at wholesale, and pays the freight both ways"*. The Agriculture Produce Market Corporation (APMC) permit farmers to sell their produce directly to consumers and establish private markets yards beyond 5 km radius of APMC to sell their produce at the desired price. However, the ground reality for marginal and small farmers are challenging.

An example could be cited from similar health reforms initiated several years ago. Govt. of India stopped home deliveries by traditional birth attendants to promote institutional deliveries aimed at saving lives notwithstanding that it would take years to strengthen the public health delivery systems to meet the demand

leaving several poor and unreached without any option. Mothers and babies died *en route* to functional hospitals or after reaching home post-delivery. Compounded with this was the implementation of conditional cash transfer schemes promoted by centre and opposed by state government. Instead, the State govt. promoted schemes engaging private players to meet the demand as public health facilities in peripheral areas are practically non-functional.

The farm reform bill too has posed a similar dilemma among farmers. While the farmers are still smarting from the preceding shock of demonetization, GST implementation, weather vagaries and COVID-19 pandemic, the new reforms are unnerving the farmers particularly the marginal and small farmers who are apprehensive about the process of its implementation. Marginal and small farmers are left to the mercy of price fluctuations because the small land holders are often compelled to desperate selling of their produce and do not have easy access to storage infrastructure in the hinterland. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to fear of crop wastage due to lack of transportation in lockdown, unavailability of timely seeds and other inputs and shortage of liquidity to buy them created a major threatening condition for the farmers. Their concerns are:

- Small farmers are not collectivised to negotiate minimum base price with traders.
- Financial needs compel them to sell their produce much lower than the base price.
- Fear of not getting loans during crisis and crop loss due to weather conditions.
- Unavailability of warehouse facility to stock their produce till price appreciation of the produce.
- Lack of facility for cleaning, grading, sorting and packaging within vicinity.
- Cost of transportation to location specified by buyer.

Though the efforts of strengthening Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) aimed at aggregating farmers to improve outreach of the benefits expected from the recent reforms are ongoing, unless the vertical from FPO are federated till the apex level and the cap of the turnover of Rs. 5,00,000 for each FPO remains, expected benefits of the farm bill are nowhere near sight.

## Mobile Health Units iron out Anaemia

Iron Deficiency Anaemia (IDA) is a serious public health problem in India. Adolescents, especially girls are more vulnerable to it. Despite concerted efforts, India continues to grapple with high burden of anaemia and constitutes to nearly quarter of the global burden of anaemia. As per the recently published National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2020-21) results for Gujarat, anaemia in women of reproductive age group worsened from 55% in NFHS-4 (2015-16) to 65% in NFHS-5.

Mobile Health Units (MHUs), implemented by Deepak Foundation, are providing additional anaemia control program among adolescents, apart from primary health care services in remote areas. The girls and boys in age 10-19 years are screened for IDA. Those who are anaemic having haemoglobin (Hb) level below 12 g/dL (Female), 13 g/dL (Male) are enrolled for anaemia control program. The activities include:

- Group counselling and awareness sessions to increase the awareness on IDA, its causes, symptoms and prevention.
- Recipe demonstration to generate awareness on nutritional value of green leafy vegetables (GLVs) and its use to ensure dietary diversity.
- Distribution of iron and folic acid (IFA) supplementation to ensure it reach and consumption among adolescents.
- Distribution of sanitary napkins and hygiene kits to adopt safe and hygiene measures during menstruation.

Quarterly follow up of the adolescents are conducted to improve their Hb status. The result shows that the Hb level improved among severely anaemic adolescents by 43.5%.



## Development Through Strategic Alliance

Rural women are key agents for achieving the transformational economic, environmental and social changes required for sustainable development. With the social, technological and economical inclusion of women in tribal areas of Chhota Udepur district, they are carving a new identity with institutional support. Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India supported Deepak Foundation in building capacity of tribal women entrepreneurs in skills building for technological and market access in agriculture and food processing to sustainable themselves. Starting hesitantly with voluntary participation in trainings to exhibiting integration of the supply chain management and downstream market, today the Board of Directors and members of Krushak Mahila Khet Utpadak Producer Company Limited, a farmer producer company, are the champions of change.

They have applied their skills in operating *Krushak Haat*, a sales kiosk supported by Deepak Group of Companies and marketing the agricultural produce of their company such as instant khichadi, pulses, various flours, and spices near Devalia village in Tilakwada taluka of Narmada district. With the help of institutional support and strategic alliance, these women have acquired the technological knowledge for developing products, creating business development and marketing plan. Within six months period, the sales of agricultural produce are around Rs. 6000 per month.

Nainaben (below image) sets new benchmark by foraying into tourism-oriented marketing.





### “Giving wings to livelihood aspirations”

Members at Dhankanhewadi and Talawaliwadi



Overcoming past failures of initiating small enterprise, members of women's self-help groups (SHG) in Dhankanhewadi and Talawaliwadi villages in Roha taluka of Raigad persisted tenaciously and took to rearing backyard poultry. The SHG was affiliated to the Maharashtra State Rural Jeevanjyoti Abhiyan (MSRLM). After conducting group discussions women members of SHG and community gatekeepers, poultry emerged that the choice of income earning activities women were whole heartedly willing to do. Poultry rearing training was conducted among 40 SHGs members and subsequently, 340 chicks were distributed among 40 women SHG members. Today, the earning from poultry is about Rs. 279 from eggs and by live birds selling Rs. 883 per month.



'My Family, My Responsibility' campaign

Deepak Foundation distributed 1500 masks to poor households at Ase and Beriste villages of Mokhada Block in Palghar District under the campaign of 'My Family, My Responsibility'. Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) were also felicitated and 35 ASHA kits were distributed to them in appreciation of their outstanding work during the event. The event was graced by Deputy Speaker of Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, Member of Parliament, CEO and President of, Zilla Panchayat, Asst. Collector and PO Integrated Tribal Development Program of Palghar, MLAs from Vikramgad, Igatpuri, Tahsildar Mokhada, Block Development Officer, Panchayat Samiti Mokhada and Staff Deepak Foundation.

Biannual Demographic Surveillance Survey is conducted in three sites in three different states in India. The Foundation's Monitoring & Evaluation team conducts periodic training of data collectors using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) program.

Biannual Demographic Surveillance Survey



A Farmers Produce Organization (FPO) was inaugurated in Dhantej village, Savli Block of Vadodara district in Gujarat. The inaugural program was organized by the members of the FPO and representative of panchayati raj institution in Dhantej village. The Chief General Manager Gujarat Regional Office, Deputy Development Manager, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Director of Deepak Foundation, Deputy Director and Team Leader of Deepak Foundation graced the occasion.



Inauguration program in Dhantej Village, Savli, Vadodara

## Telangana

### Dared to escape an abusive marriage

Fahima (name changed), was subjected to daily domestic violence by her spouse who was an alcoholic. She shifted with her mother soon after she delivered a baby girl. She met a nurse in hospital after her failed attempt to suicide. She interacted with nurse with a hope and got to know about the Home Health Aide (HHA) course at Deepak Foundation in Hyderabad. The medical officer and the nursing staff convinced her to enroll in the HHA course. Fahima joined the course a month after she was discharged from the hospital. She completed the course and was hired soon after she completed her course. After six months, she started working at Raghavendra Hospital in Hyderabad. She earns upto Rs. 35000/- a month and is looking forward for a bright future.



Fahima at her workplace





Deepak Foundation celebrated 38th Foundation Day at its Head Office in Vadodara, Gujarat. On the occasion, employee awards giving program was organized. Pan-India team members joined the program virtually.



Avoiding noise and pollution, staff of Deepak Foundation painted earthen diya as part of "Let there be light" initiative for Diwali celebrations. The event added colour, enthusiasm and spark to drown the past memories of lockdown and travel restrictions. Rangoli and Antakshri competition were held as part of team building exercise among various staff members from different divisions.



Boys living in Samaj Suraksha Sankul, the child care institution in Vadodara managed by Deepak Foundation, made attractive lamps and diya for sale during Diwali week. Products of tribal women of Krushak Mahila Khet Utpadak Company was also displayed and sold during the event.



Ready to eat "Undhiyu" a winter delicacy and Ready to Make Undhiyu kit were sold by members of Krushak Mahila Khet Utpadak Producer Company Ltd, a woman's farmer producer company based at Naswadi, Chhota Udepur district. The online demand request from Gujarat and Maharashtra state encouraged women to market their produce through online platform with support from the Foundation.



A health check-up camp was organized in Dahej for industrial workers with support from staff of Mobile Health Unit and Health & Wellness Centre. Over 220 beneficiaries benefited from the event.



Christmas Eve celebrated with Radio City Vadodara's team and RJ Dixi at the Head Office of Deepak Foundation with children 6 to 14 years of age from rural areas near GIDC Nandesari.