

## Six Million Meals Campaign

### Solidarity Feeding by Karwan e Mohabbat for India's Dispossessed

#### Daily Report 28 April 2020

The Covid-19 pandemic has emerged not only as a health crisis but also a looming humanitarian and economic disaster. In India, the countrywide lockdown, announced with barely 4 hours' notice, left millions of daily wage labourers and working-class people stranded without access to work, home or food.

#### Relief Efforts

The relief work involves delivering standardized dry ration kits to stranded migrants, homeless persons, disabled persons, families, cooked meals and cash transfer to most vulnerable households or ration shops in places which are cut off. Our network of volunteers are working in **Delhi NCR, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar, Assam, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Telangana and Karnataka.**

*At the start of the lockdown, we had set for ourselves the target of distributing one million meals. Then as distress grew, we raised our goal to three million meals. Through these efforts, we have in the first month of the lockdown, provided over **three and a half million meals** to the poor and needy. But with the extension of lockdown and mounting hunger and suffering, the graph of our efforts continues to rise, but we need to strive even harder. Our target now is **six million meals.***

#### Relief Report as of 28 April 2020

State/City	Number of Meals* Total	Number of Meals Added from 24 April to 28 April
Delhi	10,32,700	75,000
Jharkhand	2,71,000	22,100
Bihar	1,43,946	43,946
Haryana	2,10,000	N/A
Uttar Pradesh	6,10,200	66,300
Rajasthan	7,06,800	56,800
Telangana	6,50,000	6,28,279
Assam	2,88,800	91,500
Kashmir	34,500	N/A
Gujarat	3,75,000	N/A
Mangalore	39,000	N/A
Maharashtra	11,836	11,836

\*Figure for meals inclusive of cooked meals and dry ration kits distributed, wherein 1 dry ration kit = 2 meals a day for a family of 5 members for a stipulated number of days. The number of days varies across states.

In Maharashtra, we are also providing financial assistance to distressed families. As of April 20, 2020, we have made payments of **Rs. 60980 to 348 people** across Mumbai city and the districts of Thane, Raigad, Satara, Palghar, and Wardha.

To survivors of hate crimes across India, with whom Karwan e Mohabbat has worked closely in the past, we have provided financial assistance. As of 16 April 2020, we have cumulatively transferred **Rs. 1,21,000 to 52 families** affected by hate crimes in Haryana, Jharkhand, Bihar, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh.

#### Vignettes from the Field

In **Delhi**, on 28 April, the team went to Bhatt Camp, near Tughlaqabad metro station. 380 families live in this area, the total population being around 2500 to 3000. The people living here at Bhatt colony are migrant families to Delhi from Rajasthan but have lived in Delhi through generations from 40 years ago, from the year 1977. They used to live in an area near the Tughlaqabad railway station before the riots. They moved here since 1984, when Bhatt colony was set up as a relief camp after the riots.

Bhatt colony is a very congested colony, with open drainage and gullies where people can only walk through in single file. There is a high risk of infections spreading through the colony rapidly because of the close

proximity in which people live. The distribution and media teams noted that in the small homes, 15-20 people live together. There is no possibility of “social distancing” in these conditions. The persons living in this colony sell school books for children - colouring books, origami books, etc. When the schools were open, they made about 3000-4000 rupees a month. The women here work as home-based workers and in cottage industries doing embroidery or *kadhai* work. All this work has been stopped since the lockdown.

As told to the team, the MLA of the area has not helped these people. They have not received any ration before the Karwan e Mohabbat team reached there on 28 April.



*Bhatt Camp in New Delhi, where ration distribution team arrived on 28 April. Photo: Sandeep Yadav*

The distribution teams in **Maharashtra** are working hard to reach out to most vulnerable persons in Mumbai, Thane, Raigar, Tatar, Palghar and Vardha. In these areas they helped 394 people on 30 April. These people work as auto drivers, construction site workers, many of them are machine operators on construction sites, workers who are employed through private contractors. In Mumbai, a whole community of people working in the garment industry (tailors and others) were also provided relief by the team. Many workers stuck in Maharashtra are from Jharkhand who don't have their ration cards with them. In one instance, wherein the workers in need of ration who directly spoke to the authorities were spoken to very rudely and curtly. They were told “*Jharkhand ki sarkar se maango, humse kyun maang rahe ho*” (Ask the Jharkhand government, why are you asking us?).

The volunteer team continues to face challenges. The local government bodies often do not respond to calls for requests for ration. The volunteers have to constantly chase the Nodal Officer to respond to queries, they manage to communicate the problem but no work is being done on the ground.

In Dharavi and Antophill area, the officer had given a format to submit the applications of relief. The volunteers complied to the prescribed format but to no avail. The work on the ground is not being done. In such cases, volunteers are helping people find a ration shop nearby and helping them get access to ration.

In **Assam**, a government officer had asked the team to submit an application for providing relief. Upon receiving the application, he denied the permission and gave his number instead, asking the team to call him. Numerous attempts have been made to contact him but he does not pick up. In spite of this, volunteers continued to provide relief.

In Dhemaji district, 20 households were helped. These were families of masons, carpenters, rickshaw pullers, daily wage labourers. Many of them did not have ration cards and even for those who do have it, the ration given by the government for a month is not enough to feed their families.

At this point, the team is also following up with the families who were provided ration in the earlier days of the Lockdown. Since they are in need of a re-supply, the team has also been doing second rounds of ration distribution.

In one particular instance, a volunteer was speaking to a man on the phone who was crying continuously asking to go back home in Meerut. He did not want the ration, someone from his family was admitted to the hospital and he desperately wanted to go back to home.



Nawada, Bihar



Kishanganj, Bihar