



HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM

THE IRON FETTERS

STATUS REPORT - MAY-JUNE 2020



FINANCIALS

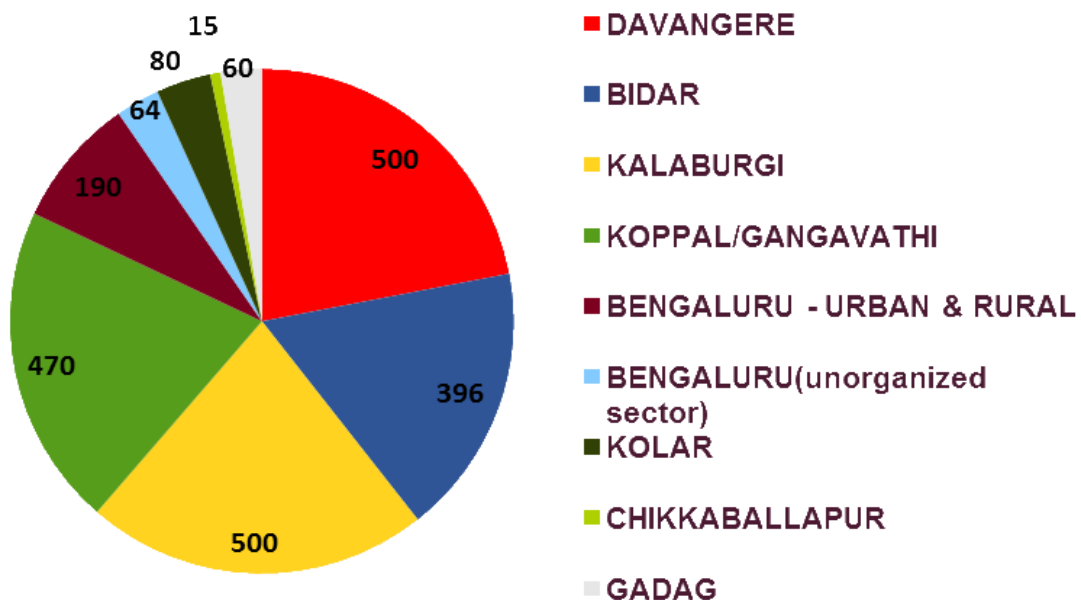
Donations & Grants - Rs. 46,87,267 Lakhs

Thanks to ALL our Donors, Grant Partners,
Relief work Partners and Volunteers:

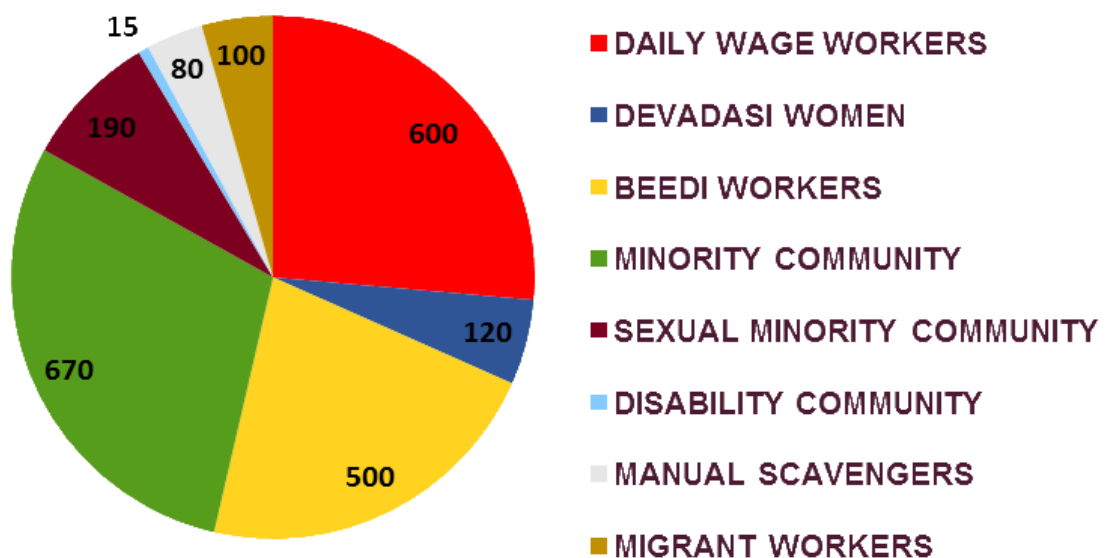
2,275 Families supported

11,000+ Individuals supported

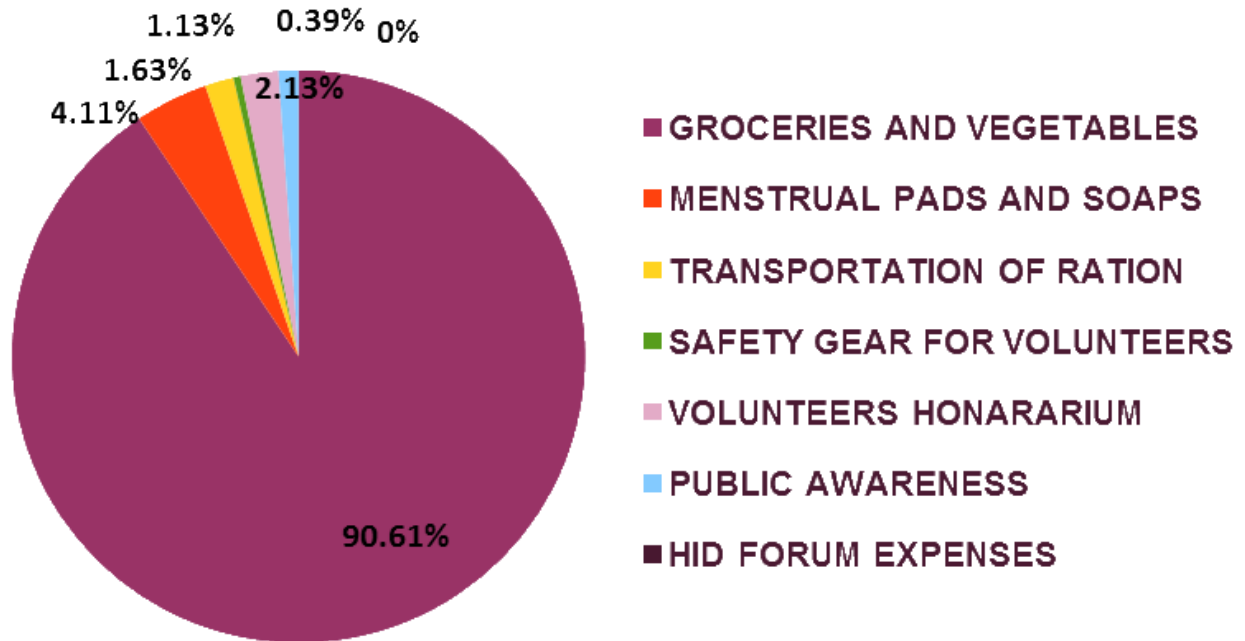
Distribution by District



Various Communities Supported



FINANCIALS



We are happy to report that we received support from all quarters to the tune of Rs. 46,87,267. Of the total resource, we have spent most of the finances towards providing ration and food for the 2275 vulnerable families identified. A total of Rs.42,46,994 was utilised towards buying ration for the families. A sum of Rs. 76,325 was spent on transportation of groceries to be delivered to a central location for packing.

Being conscious of the needs of women and young girls we ensured that they would have access to menstrual pads during the lockdown. Towards this we have spent Rs. 1,92,821. Apart from this, we also received sponsorship of 1000 menstrual cloth pads.

We allocated and spent Rs. 18,475 towards the safety of all relief volunteers, the kit involved hand sanitisers, masks and gloves. While we focused on supporting vulnerable families and providing dry ration, we were also aware that many of the relief work volunteers needed to be supported and acknowledged for their efforts and courage. A honorarium of Rs. 5,000 per volunteer for the entire relief operation was given. We have spent a total of Rs. 1,00,000 for the same. We decided to spread awareness about COVID-19 and precautions to be taken at rural areas of the Districts and allocated Rs.52,652 towards this purpose. In this entire process HIDF did not allocate finances for its admin or staff in executing relief work.

OVERVIEW

HID Forum a Bengaluru based not for profit organisation and its partners at Davanagere, Bidar, Kalaburgi, Koppal, Kolar, Chikkaballapur, Bengaluru urban and rural and Gadag districts have been engaged in relief measures with diverse vulnerable communities during the Covid pandemic.

Covid 19 and the lockdown have held down the vulnerable communities further with the chains of poverty. With the lack of systemic support, loss of work, wages, increased hunger and uncertainty, the country also witnessed migrant workers walk back home over days. However, we also saw many individuals and institutions collaborate and take a pro active role in supporting and aiding the labour force.

Situation across the districts have been worsening, as positive cases are being identified. Within days green zones have turned red with a complete seal-down, challenging communities, relief workers and administration and affecting most marginal daily wage workers and the poor and sexuality minorities.



CHALLENGES DURING RELIEF WORK

The districts have faced challenges at various stages of relief work but through their perseverance and determination they ensured that relief is reached to the those in need and in time. This journey has been testing from a logistical as well as an emotional point of view.

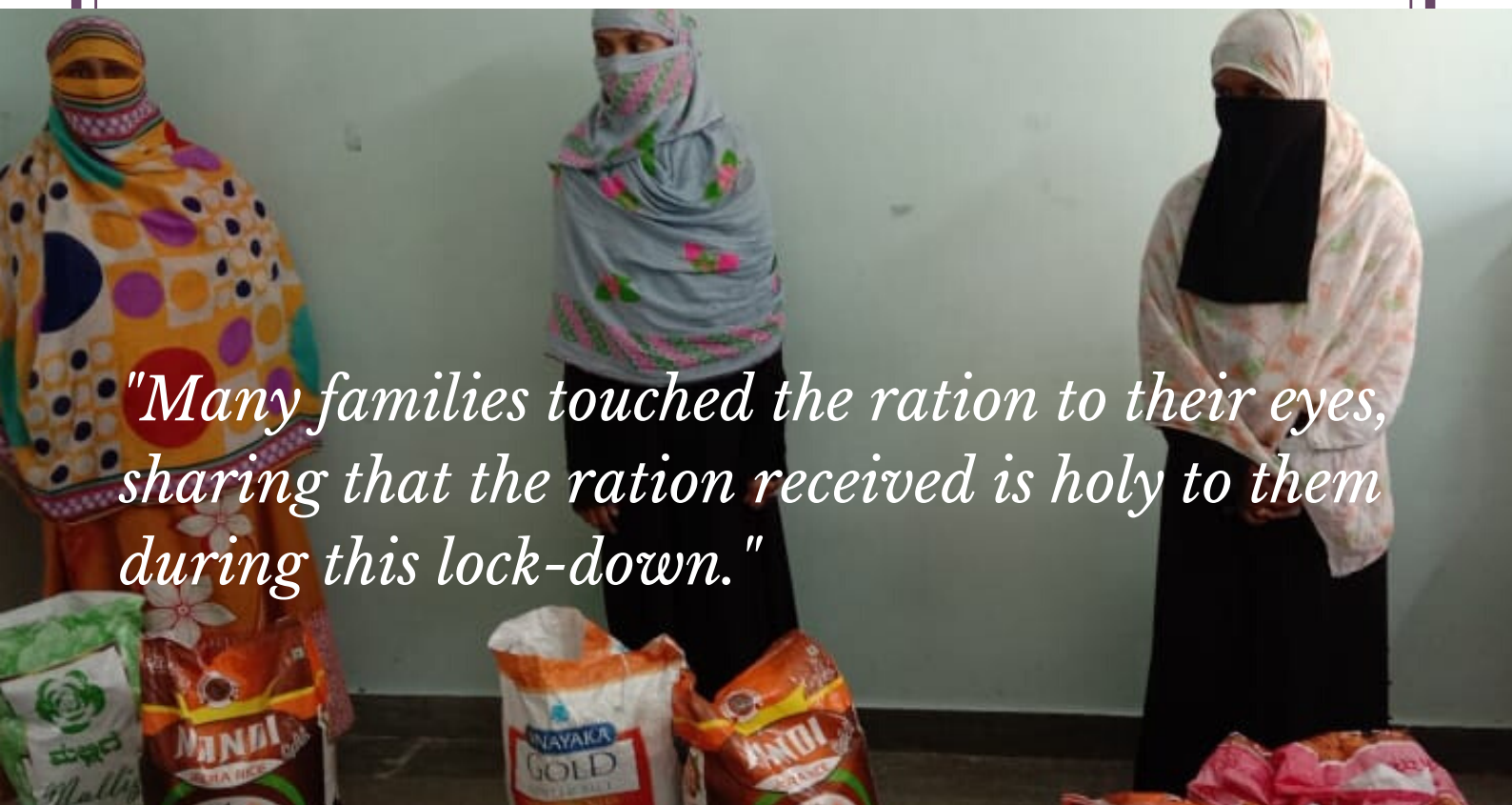
Procuring dry ration and reaching communities during seal downs has been unpredictable. The identifying and reaching out to several wholesalers and ensuring quality and reasonable prices was not a day's task. Aside that, with increasing cases, teams have had to change their plans at the last minute several times. There were many instances, where the relief members were not allowed into localities as the areas were barricaded due to fear. Despite all this, the relief teams managed to reach ration to families who were in dire need by navigating seal-downs, high temperatures of North Karnataka, while some relief workers observed fast on the occasion of Ramazan. A common experience that was shared by the teams was that when the families received dry ration, their eyes welled up with tears and they gave the team blessings, that touched the entire team and motivated them.



The relief work also attracted adverse attention. Pressure from local politicians, influential groups to provide support to their communities had thrown challenges to local teams to navigate and work. In Bidar, the team experienced few people barged into the house where the ration was stored and demanded that it be handed over to them. The team managed to pacify them and send them back. However, the team was threatened with consequences.

Across districts, the teams have had lengthy conversations with the community to explain the criteria on which the support was provided. The team at Kalaburgi shared that it was extremely hard to explain to people and convince them that they had developed a criterion based on vulnerability and needs of the communities. One time, they were confronted by large members of the community asking why only a select few were provided relief, the team was let go only by 11pm in the night after a detailed conversation.

As the lockdown is being lifted, an increasing number of migrant workers and families have started to return to their villages and towns for their safety, dignity, and respect. While we have reached out to a total of 2275 families, the influx of migrant communities poses a new challenge to us.



"Many families touched the ration to their eyes, sharing that the ration received is holy to them during this lock-down."

FAULT LINES

Teams experienced non police personnel manning check posts in some districts who tried to stop the relief vehicle as the team members belonged to the minority communities.

Along with this, some experiences reminded us that deep structural divide persists with or without the pandemic. One team went to a village to distribute dry ration, when they reached out to a known family of 2 member household (of widowed mother in law and daughter in law) that had been struggling, they refused to take dry ration because of religious differences. The team felt hurt and disappointment.

The social stigmatisation that certain community is spreading the covid, has created deep vulnerability of their identity. Many community members are wearing hats to cover their Muslim identity in these districts.

We were also deeply pained to observe the increased violence against women during the lockdown and for those who are in the process of divorce and separation. Teams were in continuous touch with these women ensuring their safety as the harassment only increased during this time.



"We are happy to be able to reach so many families and provide some breathing space for them".

The patriarchy and its impact on women during covid are of great concern to all of us. Many women seem to be bearing the brunt during this lockdown due to Covid.

Some of the team members faced caste discrimination, for instance, where Madiga community relief workers were not allowed into wards to cross over to meet other manual scavengers to provide ration. Even though the relief volunteer had a pass, people barricaded their streets, wards, areas and stopped her from moving. Although this antagonised her, she knew that the only way to quickly reach the community was to plead with the savarna community while keeping her head down during delivery of ration.

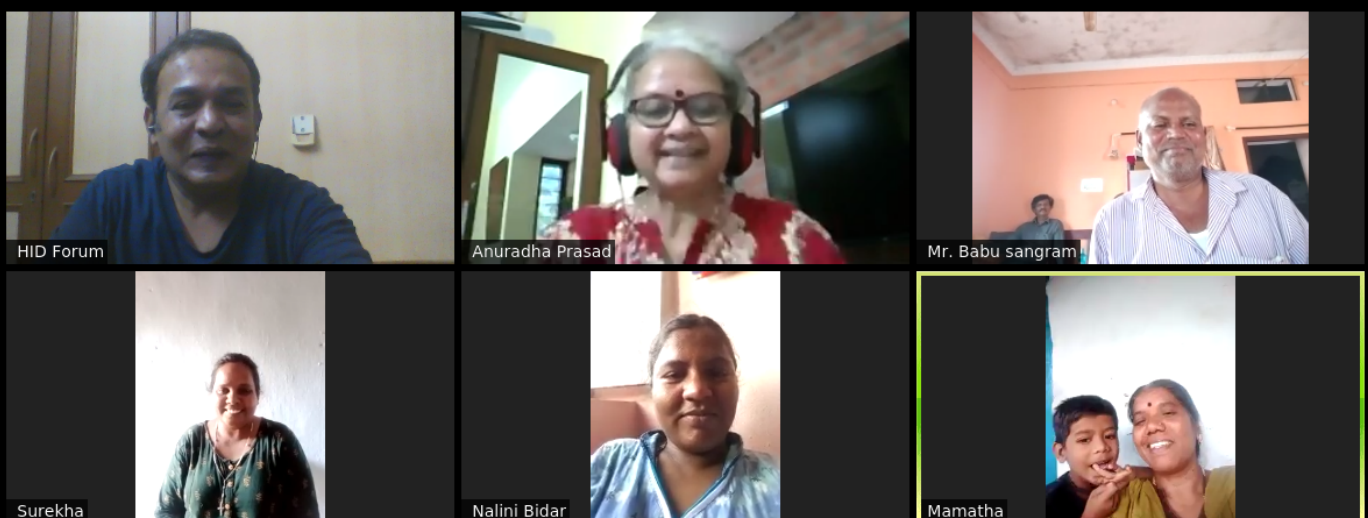
While we understand the volunteers' fear, we grapple with the lack of empathy from the savarna community.



EMOTIONAL WELL BEING

In deeper conversations with members of relief team, we realized the hardships they faced at home on a regular basis. Supporting with relief work, they shared, has provided them with newer perspectives and the strength to deal with their daily life situations. While managing a household of 10 people and being taunted regularly by her family members to another team member living in a tin shed house with a husband and 4 children whose main pre occupation is that of raising their young boy with physical and mental disabilities. Both shared that being a part of the relief team gave them inspiration and helped them to forget their daily struggles. At the same time, the sudden increase of cases in Davanagere put the entire team under tremendous pressure in terms of their own socio-emotional wellbeing.

Our interactions with Dr. Eshwara Prasad made us see the need to explore the emotional well being of volunteers. Dr. Anuradha Prasad, Consultant and board member of HIDEF, supported the teams by facilitating group counseling sessions with each district on a weekly basis. This 1.5-hour session created a space where the group shared their feelings, vulnerabilities, and the fears they were facing regarding the pandemic as well as relief work. Over the 7 weeks, the groups realised the need and importance to take care of themselves in these uncertain times.



"Never thought speaking from my heart would benefit me"

"We never made time for ourselves to express ourselves and understand our emotions".

VOICES OF VOLUNTEERS

“We never made time for ourselves to express ourselves and understand our emotions, we have always been busy with work.... never thought speaking from my heart would benefit me”

“I was bit afraid when we began the relief work, seeing the increasing cases around me made it difficult. Upon creating this platform and space for us, I am well and involved in this work if otherwise I might have felt very low”

“We all will have various pressures especially when involved in relief work. Never thought I will have a space like this to deal with my pressures. I am seeing others in my district doing relief work, but they are not getting this type of support”

“I benefited a lot by understanding that the virus inside us is far more powerful than corona. We need to understand and be able to deal with it. The 7 pathways helped me in doing this”

At HIDF we believe that we need to be in touch with our personal processes while working with others and hence we found it to be critical to support the emotional well-being of the relief teams.



GROWING NETWORKS

As we reached out to various individuals and organisations, we were able to make some crucial collaboration.

We got connected with Paint It Red, an organisation based in Kolkata, working with communities to bring shifts to use menstrual cloth pads instead of plastic pads. With the help from Stonesoup and financial support of Ms. Ananya, founder of Paint it Red, 1000 menstrual cloth pads were mobilised to be distributed in 4 districts. There is great excitement towards this new initiative from the team as well as the community.

We were also able to connect Inner Wheel club with our relief support to sexuality monitory communities to support 100 community members with dry rations that helped them sustain for a couple of weeks. Ms. Virina provided the support on behalf of the club.



HEJEGURUTU - FOOTPRINTS

On the 20th of May, 2020, we organised an online event- “HejjeGurutu” which means footprints, with 11 poets, 4 districts and 50 online guests.

“HejjeGurutu” embodies the suffering experienced by the migrant workers walking home, of the daily wagers sitting at home with no food, of the insecurity and anxiety of not knowing what next during the pandemic and the lockdown.

The intention was to understand how they, as artists and thinkers, perceive the COVID19 and the impact of lockdown on vulnerable communities.

Themes that emerged from the readings were that of hunger, superstition, struggles of migrant workers, loss of work and wages of daily wagers and communalization in the times of the pandemic. A report of the event will be shared with all.



HEJEGURUTU
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Voices that cannot be LOCKED DOWN

20 MAY 2020

NEXT STEPS

In this changed context where lockdowns with relaxations have begun and the movement of migrants have started, we are now faced with a different set of challenges.

Going beyond ration kits and developing a sustainable response to this ever-changing scenario of lack of jobs and increasing number of cases. We need to look at the impact of reverse migration on the migrant worker and the destination village/town community- at the household, community, and village level, from a social, emotional, economic and resources point of view.

District partners have shared that communities have shown resistance to put migrant workers up in local school buildings and other community venues for quarantine. There is an increased fear and misinformation around Covid19 and behavioural change towards them especially if they belonged to a particular religious community.

Many migrant workers now wish to go back due to these hardships are now stranded due to lack of transportation. With continual conversations with district partners and communities to forge local collaborations with other organizations and the government, we need to collectively address concerns specific to each district. In preparation of our next phase of work, we have had several meetings with our district coordinators to understand the needs to be addressed and ways to move forward. Most of these involve employing democratic tools and collaborations to ensure Migrants and informal economy workers like Beedi workers, construction workers, sexuality minority, devadasi women from Muslims, Dalits, Semi Nomadic tribes are living secure, peaceful, and happy lives.

We are happy to share more information on our plan. Please reach out to learn more and/ or to contribute and help us take our next phase of work forward.

PEOPLE - WHO MADE THIS HAPPEN



PEOPLE - WHO MADE THIS HAPPEN

In challenging times such as these, it is important to celebrate and recognize the people who have fearlessly put in efforts to reach the most vulnerable communities at the cost of risking their own safety.

We acknowledge all our partners and volunteers who are behind the work.

HUMA Trust and Society Ganagavathi, Koppal
Ebenezer - Bidar
Karnataka Sexual Minority Forum and Jeeva- Bengaluru.
Neralu Beedi Workers Union – Davangere
Safai Karmachari Kaval Samithi, Kolar, Padma
SAHARA - Kalaburgi
Manjula - HID FORUM - Bengaluru
Muktakka – Gadag
Sowbhagya- Koppal
Kiran Naik, Chikkaballapur

Please get in touch with our team, if you need more information

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