

# Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR)

Block: Murhu, Dist.: Khunti, Jharkhand

Situation during COVID-19 Lockdown

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## Background:

Jharkhand is a tribal dominated state located in eastern part of India. Agriculture, NTFP (Non-timber forest produce) collection and daily wage laborers are the prime source of income for rural Jharkhand. Due to untimely excess rainfall in last winter season agriculture in rabi season suffered. Some people also migrated from villages to other districts and states for better income opportunities. Sudden spread of Covid19 or Corona pandemic forced both state and union government for 2 months of lockdown. People could not work and sell their agriculture produce as well as NTFPs during lockdown period. This lockdown snatched away the rice bowl of poor tribal people & left them unprepared to deal with the disaster.

## Problem in our area:

Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR) is working in Murhu Block of Khunti district in Jharkhand since 2010. At present WOTR is working in 72 villages which comes under 7 Gram Panchayats of Murhu block with the support of various agencies. These gram panchayats are Rumutkel, Indipidi, Binda, Kodakel, Ganaloya, Godatoli and Kuda. The villagers in this area are in dire condition and daily wage earners are facing hand to mouth scenario lately. During the lockdown wage laborers were unable to work and sustain financially. Even, government sponsored MGNREGA work could not attract more people due to its lengthy process and late payment. Further to this situation, when people will return from other districts and state after lifting of lockdown, it will create more problem. An influx in migration could be observed causing extra pressure on natural resources. WOTR's team in Jharkhand have been proactively providing humanitarian support to the village communities while ensuring continuity of project work as well as communication with the beneficiaries. During the three phases of lockdown period protective measures and immediate support has been given to the villagers.

## Rapid Response and Support by WOTR:

**Awareness and preparedness at community level:** There was rampant confusion and myths when the whole state faced the situation of lockdown leading to fear among the villagers, which are still pertaining among community members in some of our project areas. Though WOTR's team has successfully raised awareness and taken protective measures during the initial and prolonged lockdown. Awareness generation efforts have been reached out to almost all the households of the project villages.

Initially during lockdown, the movement of staff was restricted in the area, but the field team was reaching out to the community with limited communication over mobile phone and WhatsApp. At present, after necessary approvals for movement within the district is being done while taking precaution measures. The maximum support has been provided to the villagers in ensuring provision of healthcare facilities, additional support in developing market linkages for agriculture produce and humanitarian support to the migrants returned to the villages. Currently we have generated list of food insecure families who struggle for daily sustenance. This number may go up and down depending on the situation and rate of migration from other districts and states.

**Support provided through Wasundhara Sevaks/Sevikas (WS):** WS have played crucial role in bringing everyone together to support each other in these difficult times. Gram Panchayats (GP) have been entrusted with responsibility during the lockdown to ensure preventive measures are adopted, and WS have actively supported GPs in identification of poor households as well as spreading awareness on preventive measures under their guidance in most of our project villages. WS has not only ensured villagers adopting all the necessary precautions like social distancing, usage of masks etc. or dispelling of fears and myths, but have also supported the villagers in day to day village activities in regard to agriculture and livelihoods. The following are the initiatives successfully undertaken by WS:

- WS have extended their responsibilities by listing of migrants from different districts and states. They have also helped in listing the poorest of the poor households and require immediate rations.
- WS have helped the farmers in marketing and supply of summer crop produce locally in villages as well as at district level. Channels set up under the various programs are helping the people to market perishable commodity directly to the vendor.
- In the initial days, our WS in the community have identified families who are left out and need ration. They have assisted PDS dealer for smooth distribution of grains under National Food Security Act (NFSA) in different villages. They have also documented the marginalized, destitute and households having no PDS ration card under NFSA. Immediately they have linked the person to the chairperson of Gram panchayat for get entitlement of 10 kg rice and 2 kg pulses.
- WS have helped in successfully distribution of masks in villages under project funded by IndusInd Bank Ltd. In total 2622 masks were prepared by the locally identified women in Binda and Gullu villages, and distributed in 10 villages of Murhu district with the help of WS.

**Ration kit:** As per the listing done by WOTR's team in the project villages, along with the extended arms of WS, families were identified for immediate relief and support. With the help of project funded by IndusInd Bank Ltd. our SHG women in these villages are proactively working towards provision of ration to most vulnerable segment of the village community. In one of our project villages i.e. Bamni, they have proactively working towards provision of ration kits to most vulnerable segment of the village community. Our Mahila Prerak have already distributed rice and dal to 50 families in Bamni village. For distribution of ration, block-level officers were present and appreciated the relief work done by the field team. The number of households village-wise are listed below as follows:



*Figure 1: Distribution of ration kits*

Table 1: Household list at village-level

Sl. No.	Village	No. of Families	No. of people
1	Binda	31	125
2	Gullu	12	51
3	Itre	8	21
4	Jamda	5	20
5	Jurmu	10	37
6	Rodo	4	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>70</b>	<b>266</b>

WOTR is also working for RCRC (Rapid Rural Community Response) to support the most vulnerable households in the area. Through RCRC funding ration have been provided to 368 families in our project area. This was done in close collaboration with GP members, and infact in some of the villages the distribution was done through the GP mukhiya, panchayat workers from the block etc. The details of village and household provided with ration are mentioned below:

Table 2: List of villages and number of families provided with ration

Sl. No	Name of the GP	Number of HH	Number of persons
1	Godatoli	40	137
2	Rumutkel	28	104
3	Ganaloja	64	208
4	Kodakel	88	360
5	Indipidi	86	342
6	Kuda	31	134
7	Binda	31	156
<b>Total</b>		<b>368</b>	<b>1441</b>

**Mask making and distribution:** What is prominently needed is the use of mask by all the community to ensure less spread of this pandemic disease. Tribal families in the area are so poor that they cannot afford to buy masks. Even on social media, the dire situation of these tribal community members was depicted where they were using leaves of some trees as masks in order to protect themselves from infection. This is the drastic picture of poverty in our country.

With the help of funds provided by the IndusInd Bank Ltd. for rapid response and relief under COVID-19 situation, WOTR began with intervention of locally manufacturing of masks and distribution in the most vulnerable villages of our project area. It was planned to distribute 2500 masks as the necessary protection measures to be taken by the villagers from infection or spread of COVID-19. At village level, 6 female tailors from project villages; i.e. Gullu and Binda, have come forward to prepare home-made sanitized masks for their fellow village members as well as for nearby villages. WOTR's project team have supported these women in purchasing the clothes for stitching masks. For stitching of each mask,



Figure 2: Distribution of masks



they will earn Rs. 7/- and generate revenue of Rs. 17500/- within 10 days. The details of masks prepared till 5th May 2020 are listed below:

*Table 3: List and Status of face mask prepared*

Sl. No.	Name	Village	Mask Prepared	Status
1	Rahil Soy Murum	Binda	376	Completed
2	Bahmani Soy Murum	Binda	275	Completed
3	Enjilina Soy	Binda	344	Completed
4	Biswasi Humsoy	Gullu	625	Completed
5	Masa Humsoy	Gullu	524	Completed
6	Junika Humsoy	Gullu	478	Completed
<b>Total</b>			2622	

As on 7th May, 2020, mask making was completed in all the villages and distributed in 4 villages, i.e. Binda, Jamda, Gullu and Rodo. By end of the first week of May, all the mask will be distributed in all project villages. The local leaders were also present during distribution of masks to villagers. Panchayat Samiti Pramukh of Murhu, Mrs. Elis Ordy, has herself distributed masks in Gullu and Jamda village. Every one appreciated the quality of mask and effort by our WS.

In present situation, a lot of problems are faced by daily wage labor and small enterprises as most of the economic activity at village level have been put on halt and people are unable to work to sustain the financially. In this situation the mask preparation and distribution has not only helped the overall community in taking protective measure and but also helped some of the people getting engaged in some work while generating extra household income. This has come out as an opportunity to work and support themselves financially. People are very happy that under current stressful situation they received humanitarian support from the funder IndusInd Bank Ltd.

**Market Linkages:** Farmer producer model has been successfully functioning in our project villages. The FPC deals in farm produce from farmers like paddy, ragi, tamarind etc. During this post-harvest season Birsa FPO had 29 quintals of paddy to be sold out to vendor, but due to sudden lock down stock could not be supplied to the vendor. Here, WOTR have procured stocked up Paddy from FPC aggregation unit in Bamni village as rice supply in ration kit. Under this activity, 5-6 village laborers have been already engaged with FPO generating 10-12 employment days. Till now, FPC once provides the material to WOTR will receive around Rs.63000/- It is pertinent to note that there is a processing required to dehusk the rice as people in our region prefer to consume boiled rice.



*Figure 3: FPO along with WS and SHG women processing paddy for ration kits*

Birsa FPC took the charge and through its channel of amazing workers, board of directors and some shareholders took the responsibility of rice processing. Women were involved in the process of boiling, drying and with the use of small rice mill in toner the Paddy was processed. This initiative has not only provided ration to the people, but employment to the daily wage laborers.

Farmers will be facing disruption in supply of necessary fertilizers, pesticides and seeds for upcoming Kharif season. Here, FPC is planning to provide supply of seeds, fertilizers, pesticides as well as



*Figure 4: WS and SHG women working with FPO on paddy production and processing*

equipment required for agriculture purposes.

**Kitchen garden kit:** Addressing only immediate needs will not suffice in this pandemic situation. If we talk about food security, often in the pressed conditions like these families go for excess carbohydrate consumption like rice in order to fill up their stomach. This usually cuts their nutritional supply and causes incidence of malnutrition. We plan to address nutritional security of families with the help of promotion of kitchen garden kits approximately for next 6 months, so that they do not fall short of basic necessities and in the trap of purchasing from market with limited purchasing power. This will be undertaken with 100% households of the project area funded by IndusInd Bank Ltd. Currently the rolling out of this intervention with the SHG is being prepared by the front-line workers.

**Livelihood:** During the lockdown, the worse scenario of poverty is faced by the daily wage labors and workers who have lost their source of livelihoods and their reserves are on verge of full consumption. If they do not find any engagement, they may have to face abject poverty. Like all other states Jharkhand has also decided to start the MGNREGA is the only program which can provide wage labor to workers amidst crisis. It will be important to register the non-job card holders who want to have employment for job card so that they can engage in MGNREGA work. WOTR is also facilitating the panchayat level MGNREGA work plan.

**Enterprise development:** Gram Vikas Samiti have also been working continuously towards income generating activities for the villagers. With their support and help, the project team will work towards small enterprise development, especially for SHG women. These activities will include goat farming, poultry, fishery and pig farming as alternative income generating sources for the villagers.

## Planning and Prospective during COVID-19:

**Food security:** The government has made provision for ration to non-ration card holders. There are some families who due to government norms are ineligible for the ration card. The ration card is issued with the listing done in the year 2011, but there have been changes in these 10 years due to change in the family system, disintegration of joint families or migration of one family to different state for better income opportunities. These are the families left to be included in the system or the families which are unable to apply through online system. On an average this percentage is about 10-12% in all the villages. Also, though the government has made provisioning of 10 kg rice per non ration card holder families this 10 kg but is insufficient for an average family of 5 members. An adult person requires 9 kg of rice for one month. We plan to reach out to these 10% families and ensure that none go hungry by making provision of enough ration.



Figure 5: Meals distributed by Didi Kitchen in Murhu

**Nutrition:** With food also comes nutrition and many families in rural India face this issue. This of course is not the felt need. When people face shortages, they immediately shift to enhanced consumption of carbohydrates to fill their stomach. If not realized this situation will push them towards malnutrition. It is important therefore to provide support through kitchen garden intervention to meet out the daily family nutrition for atleast period of 6-8 months. This will also create a sense of independence amongst the women of the household who have to struggle to provide food on the plate.

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Figure 6: Distribution of agriculture produce at village level

**Sensitization:** There is a lot of misconception about the virus among people and lack awareness on spread and transmission of virus. In these conditions, it is essential to aware the community

regarding this infectious disease. Behavioral change is essential but it will not develop rapidly in the village communities. This is a slow and on-going process. This is something which is forced behavioral change and should be done with least possible threat to the rural tribal communities. At present, our WS are the ones who can deal with the community and we need to sustain our support to these volunteers. WOTR's project team have successfully retained them or else the communication with the villagers will be hampered. We call them "Corona Champions" who are dealing with this adverse situation at village level. Apart from this, they are also looked upon for support and guidance because of their years of association with the villagers.

**Agriculture scenario:** The farmers in rural area have almost exhausted their stocks and food reserves. In absence of money it would be difficult for them to buy seeds, fertilizer etc. We are developing a preparedness plan need to tackle the unforeseen problem in near future. Certain investment in this regard is essential or else in this changing scenario or climate variability farmers will have to struggle a lot.

<b>Village Level ACTIVE Cadre helping Community- Trained/ empowered by WOTR only</b>	<b>No.s</b>
Gram Panchayat Members (Nos)	6
VDC Members (Nos)	76
SHG/ SMS Members (Nos)	10
Wasundhara Sevaks/ Sevikas/ CRPs/ VCs/MPs/ etc.	31
No of WOMEN Cadre (from all 4 of above)	33
<b>Awareness events organized / facilitated supported by WOTRians including village animators</b>	
No. of awareness EVENTS organised during the reporting period	30
No. of PEOPLE impacted through the awareness programmes	7234
No. of Structured/ Formal trainings (online/offline) conducted for GP/ VDCs/ SHGs	1
No. of PARTICIPANTS in these trainings	99
<b>Masks Preparation and Distribution</b>	
No. of MASKS prepared	2622
No. of TAILORS involved	6
No. of PERSONS to whom the masks distributed	2419
<b>Food Security and Nutrition</b>	
No. of KITCHEN Gardens (KG) (homestead)	40
No. of HOUSEHOLDS benefitting from KGs	40
Distribution of <b>Grocery kits</b> - No. of HOUSEHOLDS covered	438
No. HOUSEHOLDS received Govt. PDS/ Ration ONLY if WOTR facilitated it	15
<b>Employment Generation (WOTR funded and facilitated- include MGNREGS if we are involved)</b>	
No. of Labourdays generated (labour x days)	1908
No. of Labours employed	173
No. of FAMILIES benefitted	159
WOTR Project Fund- Amount Spent by WOTR on Labour wages (Since 1 April) - LAKH RUPEES	3.64

Type and Quantity of Works completed

Farm Pond -7, Field Bunding- 30 , LBS/GP-144



Relief activities of WOTR:



**Ration distributed to 70 most vulnerable households in 6 villages with the support of IndusInd Bank Limited, Hinduja Foundation**



**Mask Stitching with the support of IndusInd Bank Limited**



**Bottle guard production during Summer season 2020**





**Watermelon Production and Marketing through WOTR support, during summer season 2020**

News coverage in Hindustan –hindi daily



सामाजिक दूरी बनाकर अनाज का वितरण करते हुए। • हिन्दुस्तान

वितरण कार्यक्रम में प्रधान के कुन्दापू शंकर, त्रिशाम्नी बौरुआ, नाथनियल, धिवेक कुमार रहे।

जिप सदस्य और मुखिया ने अनाज का वितरण किया : मुपह में स्वयंसेवी संस्था चाटर ने गीव इंडिया नामक कंपनी द्वारा प्राप्त आर्थिक मदद से मुपह के विभिन्न गांवों में लगभग 400 लोगों के बीच अनाज का वितरण किया।

जिनमें कोड़ाकेल, बिन्दा, रुमतुकेल, इंदीपीड़ी, कुदा और गोड़ाटोली गांव शामिल रहे।

वितरण में मुख्य रूप से शामिल जिप सदस्य चंद्रप्रभात मुंडा और इंदीपीड़ी पंचायत की मुखिया दरामनी मुंदू ने अपने हाथों से सभी असहाय और वृद्ध के बीच अनाज का वितरण किया।