



DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

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ActionAid Association (India)

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19-necessitated lockdown in 2020 was an unprecedented crisis, but its disproportionate impact on the already marginalized communities due to loss of livelihoods and lack of food, shelter, health care, and other basic needs cannot be over-emphasized. Programmes and Policies for social and ecological justice have never been a straight line, given the unjust and unequal power structures and systems weaved into Indian society, economy and polity. But it just got even more overwhelmingly challenging with socio-cultural and political upheavals and ever shrinking democratic spaces for all and sundry. The regulatory framework governing registered societies forced us to take extraordinary measures to not only stay afloat but remain as relevant, agile and adaptive as can be. For the majority poor, therefore, it is an irony to speak of development, let alone sustainable development as the pace and scope of empowerment, campaigns and solidarity gets that much harder.

And yet, however difficult 2020 was, as lockdowns and physical distancing became the new normal for so many of us, what was most inspiring and hopeful was the frontline staff, workers and volunteers rising to the occasion and their leaders stoutly standing behind them risking every day of their lives and that of their families, in order to reach out to the most needy. Above all, our work may have changed gears slowing down some of our work, but our leaders at all levels ensured we didn't let our guard down on any of the past and emerging issues. There are numerous achievements we are proud to share in this report. Some of the major highlights include the following:

In **Tamil Nadu**, in Villupuram and Kallakuruchi districts, total of 5600 online appeals were made during the 2020 Annual land tribunal day to reclaim Panchami land by members of the Dalit Community. Around 280 appeals were made for homestead land, from Coimbatore and Thiruppur districts.

In Pithoragarh, **Uttarakhand**, a women Farmer's Cooperative has been registered. The cooperative will be helpful in taking forward the livelihood interventions and issues with the state. In Andhra Pradesh, six Dalit villages got around 280 acres of grazing lands used earlier by dominant caste villages. Nimanapalli and Pullicharala Mandals got access to the grazing land. Burial grounds have been arranged in 6 Dalit villages. In Jaipur, **Rajasthan** 162 families belonging to Banjara community coming under nomadic community have got homestead land at Munida Ramsar in Jaipur city.

We did several research and studies namely; a study on 'Life in Lockdown' focused on the hardships faced by Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). The study 'Pastoralist's Life in Lockdown' was conducted to understand the situation of nomadic/ pastoral community in collaboration with Maldhari Rural Action Group (MARAG) and South Asia Pastoral Alliance (SAPA). A study on 'River Ecology - Assessment of impact of Covid 19 lockdown' was conducted to find the impact of lockdown on river. A total of 550 respondents from riverine communities participated. Titled "Towards a People Focused Covid-19 Response- Stopping spread of infection, ensuring protection and reducing impact of lockdown", a study engaged deeply with informal workers in 160 districts across the country.

As part of the National Human Rights Commission's Committee of Experts on "Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Human Rights and Future Response", we submitted a report on migrant workers and other informal workers. This report formed the basis of an advisory issued by the Commission to state governments on dealing with migrant workers issues in COVID time.

In 53 districts of 5 states (Bihar, Odisha, Rajasthan, West Bengal, and Jharkhand), we were able to stop 1135 child marriages. On the issue of School closure in Kondhmal district of **Bhubaneswar** we have identified 105 schools which are about to be shut down. We have oriented the SMC members

and parents about this issue and as an outcome; letters have been submitted to State Governor, District Education Officer, and local MLA to reopen the schools.

In Uttarakhand, all suggestions on Single Women Policy have been received by the Govt.. In Gujarat, the campaign on single women's pension rights (for 2026 widowed women) in 6 districts, 11 blocks and 78 villages, resulted in 914 widows getting pension of Rs 1250 every month. Ms. Rajulben Desai, Member, National Commission for Women (NCW), visited Navsari and Tapi districts of **Gujarat** and interacted with single women and those subjected to witch-branding.

During Covid-19 emergency response, as on August 15, 2020, we have been able to provide and enable much-needed relief materials to 77,12,980 individuals belonging to vulnerable communities and groups across 24 states and one Union Territory. We have directly supported 23,55,346 individuals with relief materials, such as dry ration, cooked food and sanitation supplies, among other forms of relief. We have also facilitated access to government relief and schemes for 53,57,634 individuals.

Land, Forest and Water: *Promoting Rights and Commons, Especially Water as Commons*

The year 2020 has been quite extraordinary full of upheavals on several fronts. The Covid19 Pandemic further aggravated the vulnerabilities of the marginalized communities that we work with. On the other hand, the lockdown also affected our planned interventions. Some advances made in the last few year to bring agenda of land reforms to the centre stage of discourse within civil society and polity, received a major blow. Forced by the global pandemic, relief and addressing the immediate needs of the communities became the urgent priority. Despite of all these challenges ActionAid India continued its interventions on the issue of land and with peasants, pastoralists, landless labourers, tenants, sharecroppers, and agricultural workers, with special attention to landless, labour, poor, women and rural youth. We were able to make some advances through our grounded actions and campaigns. The experience of the pandemic has also proved that for resilience of the marginalized communities to such emergencies it becomes all the more important to get the access and control over land and natural resources including, land, forest and water commons.

Major Advances

Land, Agriculture and Forest

At National Level

Campaign and Volunteer Engagement

Community Forest Rights (CFR) claim by forest dwelling community: In the last decade, tribal communities across the country have filed 4.21 million claims to get their forest land rights recognised under 'Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (FRA). But, just 40 per cent or 1.74 million of them have been approved, says a

status report compiled by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA). The Supreme Court order in Feb 2019 for eviction of tribal from forest land whose claims have been rejected and subsequent stay on this has kept tribal people in fear. It was planned to help tribal people place their application for community forest rights recognition in places where AJAM members are actively taking up FRA work.

In continuation of the work around FRA 2006, members of forest protection committees in different places were contacted and oriented about the process of submission of CFR application. During the campaign all the cases of rejected cases were verified case by case and applications were resubmitted. All these processes were taken up with orientation of members and community leaders. An orientation of members was held from 8th and 9th December 2020 in Rayagada district and from 2nd to 5th March 2020 at Kalahandi district, after relaxation of lockdown in the state. The orientation helped people to review and understand status of their application and how to get CFR rights.

At State level

Policy engagements

In **Rajasthan**, meeting with Principal Secretary Revenue department was held in August to address land issues of Dalit community i.e. some of these communities have possession on agriculture land but they do not have records of rights and there are some cases where Dalit have records of rights over land, but the possession is with non-Dalit communities. Other area discussed was DNT/SNT/NT communities are staying in common land such grazing land, but they have not been given habitation rights over this land. After the meeting, team has submitted the cases of these issued to the revenue department and first action towards it has been taken to digitalization of land issue as mentioned above. State Govt. issued order on this.

In **Tamil Nadu**, in Villupuram and Kallakuruchi districts, total of 5600 online appeals were made during the 2020 Annual land tribunal day to reclaim Panchami land by members of the Dalit Community. Around 280 appeals were made for homestead land, from Coimbatore and Thiruppur districts.

The written appeals have been submitted by the rural Dalit women on behalf of their families.

Campaign and Volunteer Engagement

In **Uttar Pradesh**, Muzaffarnagar and Shamli, a campaign for Land Rights was organized in the pretext of Covid19 lockdown and returning migrant landless labour from metro cities to provide them land and work "Pravasi Bhumiheen Mazdoor BhuAdhikaar Abhiyaan". A total of 939 applications of landless people from 14 villages were filled. The data is being compiled for further process. Issues of land ownership of colony raised before Jamiat-Ulama Hind and Jamat-e-Islami, Charity Alliance and Tayyab Trust. The community raised the demand to provide registry of the lands to the IDPs registered with the above-mentioned institute. We have also creating awareness among community regarding the same with the local people. A meeting with IDPs and other stakeholders was organized to take over the common lands like Madarsa Masjid, graveyards of the violence affected villages by waqf Board. A total of 2 applications were filed for providing graveyard land to the IDPs colony, one to the SDM and another to Minority Welfare Officer. The patwari has provided the report.

Grounded Action

In **Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand**, as a result of the campaign on land issue, SDL (Sub divisional committee) meeting was organized at Dharchula, where 33 ICF (Individual claim format) were discussed and 15 were sent to DLC (district level committee) and digital mapping of 2 Raji tribe villages where 15 families were involved. Around 10 Raji families from Didihat tehsil were given land documents (pattas).

ST families from Dharchula (03 gram sabhas) had been demanding land in their names since 2018-19. They were living displaced during 1970-71 due to disaster and settled by government. A total of 45 families got government grant land in their names (0.015 hectare) and process is going on for the remaining 15 families. A total of 6 single women got the land documents in their name. Further, 11 families got cowshed in village Dutti and 35 women from 5 villages prepared 10 thousand plants of onion in the nursery and sold these at the rate of Rs. 40 for one hundred plants.

In Solapur district, **Maharashtra** a total of 110 appeals for IFR claims approvals submitted and evidence and documents required for CFR claim submission were collected. In order to conserve forests plantation drives were organized, in which 23000 bamboo saplings were planted in sacred groves and CFR areas. A total of 35 new NTFP harvesters become members of the cooperative with the contribution of share capital Rs.100/- each.

In **Karnataka**, H D Kote taluk 206 families have submitted individual forest rights applications for 250 acres of land. At the same time these families have submitted community rights claim for the 7 hamlets to the extent of 2800 acres of land. In Periyapatna taluk all the 21 community entitlements are being claimed by the people for the 21 hamlets. Out of the 212 pending IFR applications 68 applications of Handigudda and Kandibokke have been sorted out.

In **West Bengal**, a total of 16 Women Farmers Organisation have been formed and got registered with the state agriculture department. Orientations were conducted virtually for the farmers on collectivising them. They were explained the purpose of forming Farmers Interest Groups (FIG), purpose of forming Farmers Producers Company (FPC), benefits of FPC, concept of share capital were also explained importance of business planning, In addition they planned the ways to improve organic farming practice at their level. Farmers Interest Groups (FIG) of farmer who practice organic farming were formed in South 24 Pargana and East Medinipur. A total of 241 FIGs promoted in East Medinipur and 30 in South 24 Pargana to promote small business-oriented microeconomic entrepreneurship. In Purba Medinipur district 1157 farmers of Contai-I, Contai-III and Khejuri-I Blocks have got 33 types of indigenous and perennial varieties of plants and seeds. Around 200 farmers of Contai-I, Contai-III, and Khejuri-I Blocks have been supported 10 types of seeds such as sunflower, mug, and vegetable for Bulbul emergency response. It has helped to preservation and promotion of indigenous seeds among the farmers of the operational areas.

In Purba Medinipur district, **West Bengal**, due to strong engagement with block agriculture department and Comprehensive Areas development Consortium (CADC) the 37 Farmers Interest Groups (FIGs) were able to access different services such as seeds, low cost alzoia Pit, low cost vermicompost and duckary etc. A total of 1080 farmers have been linked with the Government schemes and services such as Krishak Bandhu, PMKSY, seeds, and bee keeping etc. Besides this, 8 FIG/FWGs have prepared and submitted their plan to ADA and CADC and 3 FIGs got approval.

A total of 13 Eco Clubs have been formed comprising local students and youth to promote climate consciousness. There are 13 eco clubs in 13 schools and 15 villages in East Medinipur. In South 24 Pargana 10 Eco-Club have been formed in 9 villages.

In Navsari, **Gujarat**, during the lockdown, farmers faced a lot of difficulty in getting agricultural input support like seeds and fertilizers, we approached to Krishi Vikas Kendra with seed requirements (variety of seeds and quantity of seeds) generated by village level Sangathan, following which we got subsidized seeds from Krishi Vikas Kendra. Around 550 farmers from 25 villages, who have been cultivating forest land and non-forest land were linked with “Krishi Vaividhyakaran” scheme, they got seeds of maize, tomato, bitter melon, okra, brinjal, bottle gourd. In 7 villages of Navsari districts 76 households are collecting forest produce i.e., Mahua for collective selling are in the process to get license for forest produce collection and selling.

In Pithoragarh, **Uttarakhand**, a women Farmer's Cooperative has been registered. The cooperative will be helpful in taking forward the livelihood interventions and issues with the state.

In Nellore district, **Andhra Pradesh** 175 farmers got subsidized seeds from the Government. A total of 219 families cultivated paddy in 255 acres of land and got yield of 415 tons of paddy and at present another crop is in progress. They got an income of Rs.58,10,000/-. Workshops were in 3 mandals were organised on natural farming. A total of 125 farmers (75 women, 50 men) participated in these workshops and learnt about various aspects of zero budget natural farming, including Jeevamrutha, Beejamrutha, Mulching and Moisture, Intercropping, Contours and bunds, preparing vermicompost and organic pests.

In 720 acres of government lands identified, encroached by ineligible/ landlords in four operational Mandals. Applications filed for 535 acres. Around 300 acres of land is appropriated and cultivation started by 187 landless Dalit families.

Six villages of Dalit community got access to round 280 acres of grazing lands and hillocks that were being used only by dominant caste villages. Additionally, two villages Nimanapalli and Pullicharala Mandals got access to the grazing land with the support of government. Burial grounds have been arranged in 6 Dalit villages after collective interventions by the local collectives.

In Jharkhand, three demonstrations of organic farming were promoted in Giridih, Madhupur and Musabani blocks. More than 800 farmers visited and learned through these centers about use of organic manure, chemical free pesticides and traditional seeds. Post lockdown six days Kisan Pathshala was organised in the Madhupur Block at Jeetpur and Chechali villages. Around 180 women were provided training on the farming of Urad, Chana and Mustard by scientists from KVK. They delivered the technical inputs and provided the know-how for supplementary income generation through farming. Vegetable kits having seeds of 8 varieties of vegetables were given to 5 women's collectives. In Kano and Siktiya panchayats, 45 women farmers received seeds of Teesi and Mustard.

Water Commons

India is suffering from the worst water crisis in its history and millions of lives and livelihoods are under threat. Currently, 600 million Indians face high to extreme water stress and about two lakh people die every year due to inadequate access to safe water. The crisis is only going to get worse. ActionAid has been engaged in generating awareness among the masses for water conservations and supporting sustainable community models for water harvesting and conservation. The Covid19 pandemic further aggravated the issues that marginalized communities have been facing for long. It is evident from the findings of our studies as well.

At National level

Policy Engagement

The year 2020 was a difficult year. Our country experienced longest national lockdown due to COVID 19 pandemic from 22nd March. It affected each and every sector and put many people in trouble. As usual consultations were not possible during the lockdown period, ActionAid conducted webinars to engage with the civil society and other stakeholders on pertinent issues

- **Our Survival and Sustainability in Rich Biodiversity** - 5th June - World Environment Day
- **World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought** – 17th June,
- **Living with Nature** - 28th July 2020 - World Nature Conservation Day,
- **Tribal People’s indigenous knowledge and practices in protecting nature and health** - 6th August 2020 - International day of Indigenous people,
- **Life of Pastoralists during covid-19 lockdown** - 28th August - World Pastoral day,
- **When the Water Ran Clean: Impact of Covid 19 lockdown on rivers in India** - 25th September 2020 - World Rivers Day,
- **Towards Social & Ecological Justice in Fisheries - In the memory of T- Peter’** - 18th December 2020

Around 30-40 people participated in the webinars. Studies conducted by ActionAid were presented during some of these webinars.

Jal Sathi Orientation: Jal Sathi or water volunteers are the frontline persons in taking forward our work around protection of water commons in various locations. They take actively engage in identifying and keeping water bodies clean in their respective areas and spreading awareness on water conservation. Two orientations were organised for the water volunteers to build their perspective on importance of conservation of water and protection of water bodies. The first orientation programme was organised in Rayagada, Odisha from 19th to 23rd January, 2020 where more than 100 water volunteers participated. Another orientation was organized in Nawarangpur, Odisha from 27th to 31st January. Around 80 volunteers participated in the orientation. These orientations were facilitated by resource persons actively working on the issue of water. The water volunteers to prepare their work plan to protect water bodies and educate people in their respective locations.

Research and Studies

We conducted 3 **studies** to understand the impact of lockdown on PVTG communities, pastoralists and nomadic and impact on river ecology.

The study **‘Life in Lockdown’** was focused on the hardships faced by Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) during lockdown due to Covid19. PVTGs faced a lot of problem in moving inside the forest, collecting NTFP items, storing and bartering or selling those. Their major source of income for the year earned during the season was lost. Due to lack of access and control over resources, people could not sale their products and suffered financial loss, NTFP could not be sold or bartered for their essential commodities.

The study **‘Pastoralist’s Life in Lockdown’** was conducted to understand the situation of nomadic/pastoral community in collaboration with Maldhari Rural Action Group (MARAG) and South Asia Pastoral Alliance (SAPA). The pastoralists, NT/ DNT communities suffered because of sudden lockdown, fear of covid spread due to livestock and social restriction and closure of markets and

shops were biggest challenge. Sell of livestock was not possible during those months leading to loss of income. Pastoralist and NT, DNT have been systematically alienated from pasture commons on unknown and challenging terrain. During covid 19 they could not reach to their destination and face problem enroot. They faced huge loss during the lockdown. They could not sell their livestock products during covid 19 restrictions and suffered the loss.

A study on '**River Ecology - Assessment of impact of Covid 19 lockdown**' was conducted to find the impact of lockdown on river. A total of 550 respondents from riverine communities participated. It showed that the Covid19 lockdown also had some positive impact on Environment, Water and Air due to reduced human activities and shutdown of polluting industries. The quality of water in the rivers improved and it became useable for the people.

Campaign and Volunteer Engagement

We have been working towards generating awareness on protection and rejuvenation of water bodies. ActionAid and water volunteers were part of the **Godavari Yatra** organised by Jal Biradari and Tarun Bharat Sangha from Timbakaswara, Nasik, Maharastra to Rajahmundry, Telengana from 4th to 21st February 2020 along the bank of Godavari river. The objective was to spread message to 'Save River' by keeping it free from pollution, contamination and remove the obstructions that check the flow of the river.

Water literacy programme helped reaching people around different water bodies and sensitize them about their role and responsibility to protect and conserve water. This was organized on the bank of Yamuna river from 6th to 10th March 2020. Every day around 25 volunteers gathered in different locations for discussion and interaction with people who visited the river for holy dip. IEC materials like leaflets, posters and festoons were prepared on the issue of water and distributed and displayed among people for awareness. Leaflets were distributed and sometimes read aloud for the people to listen. Around 10,000 people were reached out water literacy programme. It was learned that people want information and facts about what is happening around water so that they will take actions at local level.

Water Literacy and Water Volunteers programmes were also organised along with the banks of the Yamuna, Ganga, Gandak, Mahanadi rivers along with plantation drives of the trees of indigenous varieties. More than 6,000 Water Volunteers were enrolled. As a result, plantations was done on river beds and around water bodies. Awareness and education on water issues have been taken up women groups and youth groups in different locations.

At State level

Research and Studies

Documentation of status of availability of water in the 35 target villages was carried out with the objective to sensitize the community. A document was prepared for wider distribution at Gram sabha, block, district level. The study was submitted to District Magistrate, Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand by the women leaders along with their demands.

Campaign and Volunteer Engagement

In **Delhi**, we organized "Green Delhi Campaign" and engaged with 5000 community members to continue building their capacity on water and sanitation. These community leaders are members of the Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) committees. These committees were formed as a part of developing community based model on water and sanitation. Contributing to the fulfill the objective

of 100% Open Defecation Free, Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban, 10 community toilets have been repaired and made functional. Around 5000 individuals use the community toilets preventing open defecation. A total of 500 dustbins have been distributed amongst WATSAN members to start waste segregation and promote the same among the community. An average 3000 Kgs of the waste has been segregated on daily basis. Around 435600 square feet areas consisting of 10 parks located in the neighborhood of Green Center has been restored.

Bundelkhand has been experiencing water crisis for various reasons. In such a context, we had initiated the Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan in 121 villages of Mahoba, Lalitpur, Jalaun and Hamirpur Districts of **Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh**. The Campaign focused to mobilize community volunteers for water conservation and rejuvenation of traditional water structures in villages therefore water volunteers (Jal Sathis) were identified from distressed villages. A total of 605 water volunteers are actively connected with the campaign. Water volunteers (Jal Sathi) prepared proposals for Gram Sabha meetings, which were submitted in the gram sabha of 2nd October in 65 villages. The proposal included the revival of traditional water structures and conservation, excavation, cleaning, plantation, revival of drains, etc. As a result of the Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan

- 194 hand pumps were repaired and 19 new hand pumps were also installed.
- 46 village common ponds have been rejuvenated. All (NRM) natural resource management work was done under MNNREGA,
- Supply of drinking water in 27 distress villages were ensured. Water tanks for drinking water established in these villages.
- 12 new farm ponds were constructed through the department of land conservation.
- 30 check-dams for water conservation were repaired in 16 villages

ActionAid organised plantation drives in **Delhi NCR** area in order to increase green cover and counter the air pollution. Community members and youth were involved and around 10,000 tree saplings were planted. The plantation was done in the immediate surroundings of 4 Green Centers, Parks, Open spaces and in various MCD schools. These 4 Green Centers were developed in 10 different locations in Delhi.

In **Delhi**, a cyclothon titled 'Peddling for Environment' was organized to generate awareness about the environment on occasion of World Environment Day in Delhi. Around 200 college youth participated in the cyclothon and covered around 100 km area of North East Delhi. They peddled to promote the message of responsible conduct to preserve the environment in the community.

Grounded Action

In Jaipur, **Rajasthan** 162 families belonging to Banjara community coming under nomadic community have got homestead land at Munida Ramsar in Jaipur city. Most of the slums in the project area have problem with drinking water. With continuous engagement with municipal cooperation construction work has started for supply running water for two slums in Macheda; with these more than 400 families belongs to two slums of Macheda and other slums nearby would-be getting benefit. Team has calculated that more than Rs.250000 monthly could be saved from water by families of Macheda. The slum will be connected with main water supply line that Jaipur city is getting i.e. Bilaspur Dam supply line.

As a result of the successful engagement of women's collectives with the district administration of **Pithoragarh district, Uttarakhand**, the water supply related issues were resolved in many villages. The earlier sanctioned but pending works were also completed. A total of 4 water tanks of 2000 liters have been constructed in village Hudki and Chami. Water pipeline was repaired in 7 villages.

Water canal construction work was carried out in Village Baram and Birkham. The pending work under drinking water scheme of Rs.5 lakh was completed in village Ghattabagad. The list of villages submitted at the District level by the women collectives will be linked with the scheme *jal aur kal*.

A total of 6 ponds in **Noida** have been taken up for rejuvenation. Committees of youth and women have been formed for pond rejuvenation. These six ponds are spread over a total area of 2.44 hectares of land. These ponds will be able to store over 12.8 million gallons of water. Around 1700 saplings have been planted around the ponds and the adjoining areas.

In order to address the issue of potable water, the community in the villages of Nalbari and Baksa districts of **Assam** took the initiative and engaged with the Public Health Department. Community members, mostly women, have practically conducted the collection of water samples, visiting water testing laboratories. They oriented the community on water quality testing and its importance. The water sample from the Baksa district witnessed that percentage of Iron in drinking water is 2.93 which is high, and Fluoride was also found in most of the testing samples. However, the Arsenic level was 0% in the collected water samples.

A programme to generate awareness on protection of bio-diversity and commons was organized at Langolsabi floating elementary school in Bishnupur district of **Manipur**, on the occasion of International wet land day on 2nd February 2020. The function was attended by 36 women and 47 men from the local community, along with eminent civil society members, UN member, government officials and residents of Loktak area. Loktak has been an important biodiversity wetland hotspot in the region, especially for Manipur and hence it becomes important to generate awareness on its protection and sustainability for a healthy ecosystem.

A consultation was held in Bishnupur, **Manipur** to discuss mechanisms and collective measures of local community for conservation of the Loktak lake. The measures to check the use of chemical fertilizers in agricultural fields that has harmful effect on humans and other living bodies in the lake, promotion of sustainable livelihood opportunities for people dependent on the lake were discussed. Farmers who are encouraged by ActionAid for promotion of organic farming were present in the consultation along with other stakeholders from the community. Such consultations are needed from time to time to reiterate the harmful effects of excess use of chemical fertilizers and insecticides in their agricultural fields.

In Chittoor district, **Andhra Pradesh** the efforts led to increase in the **water** storage capacity of Gaddamvaripalli irrigation tank through the MGNREGA intervention.

A day long orientation on issue of water was conducted in each of the five mandals of Chittoor district. Around 250 young men and women participated and took the responsibility of mapping the water bodies. In 168 villages, mapping of water bodies was carried out that were encroached upon. A total of 210 irrigation tanks were found to be encroached and reports were submitted to the Mandal administration for action.

Jal Samvad was organised to be observe World River Day on 27th September 2020 in **Bihar and Jharkhand** along with other allies. The participants raised their concern over the various issues and crisis of river waters, climate change and environment degradation and its relevant implications and deliberated on the actions required to mitigate the crisis.

Paani panchyat organized in Madhupur and Margomunda blocks witnessed 477 participants from different villages. The rainwater conservation technique, traditional cropping pattern for maintaining the moisture of the soil were discussed.

Labour and Livelihoods Rights: With Focus on Women and the World of Work

The pandemic and the sudden lockdown resulted in shutdown of all economic activities which had a devastating impact on the labour market and made the fragile situation worse for these informal workers, particularly women workers. As a result, the unemployment rate increased manifold. The International Labour Organization (ILO 2020) report indicated that because of COVID-19, an estimated 400 million informal sector workers are at risk of abject poverty in India. Women are likely to bear the brunt of job losses the most because much of their work is invisible, and they are more likely to work in informal work arrangements. Moreover, the significant and widening gender gaps in workforce participation rates, employment and wages that existed before the lockdown have intensified during the post-lockdown period. In a survey of more than 11,500 informal workers conducted by ActionAid Association more than 78 per cent of respondents reported loss of livelihood and there was a major reduction in the work. Before the lockdown, the vast majority worked beyond 40 hours a week; and after the lockdown, over two-thirds of the respondents reported working zero hours a week. Over 48 per cent of respondents did not receive any wages after the lockdown and 17 per cent received partial wages. Along with the gross imbalances in gender distribution of unpaid care work, the COVID-19 pandemic worsens the situation by increasing women's burden of domestic chores, unduly cuts and lay-offs in employment.

These multifaceted impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the informal workers especially domestic workers, home-based workers, garment workers, street vendors, bidi workers, migrant workers etc has deepened the crisis for these workers. ActionAid is consciously working with women across the spectrum of work, such as domestic workers, street vendors, bidi workers, home-based workers, construction workers, garment workers, agricultural workers, waste pickers, fisher workers, etc., to understand and assess gender-based inequalities and vulnerabilities faced by them, especially those related to violence and access to resources and bring down the inequalities.

Major Advances

Policy level engagement

National Level

In the aftermath of the Covid-19 outbreak, we submitted recommendations to the Covid-19 Economic Task Force set up by the government. Titled "Towards a People Focused Covid-19 Response- Stopping spread of infection, ensuring protection and reducing impact of lockdown", the recommendations were based on our deep and continued engagement with informal workers in around 160 districts across the country. They focused on marginalised and vulnerable sections of the population who were particularly at risk, including construction workers, plantation workers, street vendors, garment workers, domestic workers, home-based workers, farmers and landless farm labourers, fish workers and sanitation workers.

ActionAid brought out policy briefs based on the analysis on the labour codes, and the expected impact of labour codes on the workers and its many dimensions, a series of consultations on labour codes were organized in 8 states and more than 30 districts.

As part of the National Human Rights Commission's Committee of Experts on "Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Human Rights and Future Response", we submitted a report on migrant workers and other informal workers. This report formed the basis of an advisory issued by the Commission to state governments on dealing with migrant workers issues in COVID time.

ActionAid has consistently engaged with the reform process of labour legislation and shared suggestions with people's representatives and submitted recommendations to the Labour Ministry on the draft rules to the labour Codes.

ActionAid was invited for the pre-budget consultation along with other civil society organisations. Shared our recommendations on livelihood generation for informal workers in both rural and urban areas, setting up migration facilitation centres, promoting women's employment, and ensuring and expanding access to vital schemes such as PDS.

ActionAid initiated a process of engagement with informal workers across the states to raise awareness about the Labour Codes. We have also been engaging with state labour departments for extending protections to informal sector workers such as domestic workers and home-based workers.

Organized several webinars to promote discussion, share views and create knowledge on rights of marginalized communities such as ensuring inclusive approaches to refugees and asylum seekers, promoting ecological justice in fisheries, and protecting rights of informal workers.

At State level

In **Uttar Pradesh** ActionAid with support of Vigyan Foundation is working towards a comprehensive act for the domestic workers in the state. Following a meeting with Additional Chief Secretary-Labour and employment ActionAid prepare a draft act and shared it with the labour department in coming days.

In **Rajasthan** we prepared a state report of both the first and second round of survey with informal workers and shared with labour minister and labour dept./ commissioner with recommendations. With the continuous engagement with labour minister / labour department with CSOs - following suggestions were accepted by Labour department:

- The government collaborated with the industries to reconstruct employment opportunities for those who have returned and daily wage workers and created an online database collection to map the skills.
- Labour department accepted for physical registration process under BOCW at labour *addas* in urban areas of Jaipur.

In **Bihar** we continued working with the state govt, labour department on "Worker Facilitation Centre" established in Gaya District and managed the Labour Helpline Number (9430924142) for Safe Migration of Labours from Bihar to other States in the pandemic, we set up 5 facilitation centres in Hyderabad, Jaipur, New Delhi, Mumbai and Bhubaneswar for effective response towards the problems of stranded migrant labours during COVID19 pandemic and supported them in accessing the relief support, benefits of central/state Govt. Policies and Schemes, legal help and another emergency supports etc. We reached around 30000 migrant labours through these centres in 5 cities and provided Socio-Legal Counselling supported, Food support, Train / Travel Ticket arrangements etc.

Research and study

ActionAid launched a longitudinal national survey with informal workers during the lockdown to highlight their challenges and work with state and national governments for an inclusive and effective response based on grounded evidence. The survey was piloted in Bihar with a focus on the migrant workers who were returning from urban centres. The first round of our survey covered more than 11500 workers in 21 states. It captured the situation of informal workers, especially migrant workers, with respect to their wages, livelihoods, savings, debt, access to relief and welfare schemes, and housing. The second round of the survey covered more than 16900 workers in 23 states and explored the transitions on the parameters mentioned above in the unlock phase. The national reports and state reports based on this survey helped strengthen our interventions with informal workers.

ActionAid also came out with a publication which focused on particularly vulnerable social groups including women, children, de-notified and nomadic tribes, and their protection and well-being during the pandemic. These recommendations were shared with relevant bodies at the national and state levels such as National Commission for Women and National commission for Protection of Child Rights.

Organised a campaign Fearless Worker/ BebakKamgar with specific focus on sexual harassment faced by women workers at workplace. The campaign's main aim was to strengthen the implementation of POSH Act. We aimed to reach to 163 districts initially but due to COVID situation could reach only to 50 districts and submitted 50 RTIs to get the status of Local Complaint Committee.

Another campaign #MainBhiShramik- a social media campaign to highlight the challenges faced by women workers in the pandemic. More than 1500 unique tweets with #Mainbhisramik highlighted the impact of lockdown on women workers in the country.

ActionAid initiated campaign on challenges faced by domestic workers through Missed call. The campaign reached to 21 states and garnered around 21k calls including community members, due to this momentum created on the ground NHRC issued an advisory to Union and State govt on Informal Workers where it has taken note of the condition of domestic workers and urged for registration, free ration, and cash support. The Labour Bureau at the Ministry of Labour and Employment has been entrusted with the task of conducted national survey on domestic workers in the coming year.

Grounded Action

In **Coimbatore district**, with efforts of ActionAid, the district vigilance committees on bonded labour which was not convened for last 3 years became functional in 2020, following our efforts at the ground level.

Informal labourers

In **Odisha**, ActionAid with the help of local partner CCWD facilitated a State level unorganized worker collective named Anasangathita Sramika Manch (ASM) where 3252 (Male-1928 & Female-1928) came together. The Construction workers received Identity card and 1292 Construction workers received support from Odisha building and other construction workers welfare board. An amount of INR 43.81 lakh was received by workers (various benefits under Education, Death, Marriage, Tools & safety equipment etc.)

In collaboration with CCWD, various networks and other local CBOs we engaged with the state authorities. Following interactions with the Labour Commissioner and Chairperson of Odisha Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board (OBCWW) for the promotion of better social security of laborers / workers, the State Government has declared hike in following benefits:

- Marriage benefit INR 25000 increased to INR 50000.
- Natural death benefit INR 1.00 lakh increased to INR 2.05 lakh.
- Accidental benefit INR 2.05 lakh increased to INR 4.05 lakh.

In **Uttar Pradesh**, a focused campaign for building and other construction labour was organised in 10 districts to facilitate registration and getting social security benefits from Building and other construction worker welfare board. A total of 4732 workers registered under BOCW act in which 1266 are female.

We initiated Bidi worker facilitation Centre in Mirzapur, Jhansi, Lalitpur, Jaunpur and Muradabad in collaboration with Ministry of Labour and Employment. More than 1370 Bidi worker families have been registered and will begin receiving benefits from the Ministry of Labour and Employment labour.

In **Bihar** 21 laborers including 4 men, 4 women and 13 children were rescued from the Brick Udyog, in Siwan. Each family were paid with their pending wages in total of Rs 56,000/- from the Brick Owner and arranged a vehicle for the labourers to return their home in Gaya.

In **Karnataka** 100 families were provided livelihood support to start their own sheep/goat rearing and poultry.

Domestic workers

In **Lucknow** a collective of women domestic workers has been formed and they have been capacitated on various issues related to social security, decent wages, right to collective bargaining and prevention of sexual harassment at workplace. We formed and strengthened 67 women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and provided training to 630 women on institution-building, enterprise management, financial literacy, and digital literacy. Next step is to get their bank accounts opened and registering them with the National Urban Livelihoods Mission to get livelihood support from the government.

In **West Bengal** domestic workers union (Paschim Banga Griha Paricharika Samiti)members underwent capacity building on various issues to take forward their agenda. Around 880 domestic workers were linked with state supported skill building programs and received certificates. A total of 664 workers got enlisted in the State Assisted Provident Fund Scheme . We were able to mobilise 200 employers and negotiated with them for weekly holidays and special leave and working hours. Further the domestic workers collective was able to recover their bonus of Rs. 2,16,000/ with negotiation with the employers. To celebrate their collective struggles and success on International Domestic Workers' Day around 3000 domestic workers across the state gathered in Kolkata on June 22 for a walkathon and demanded for a law on domestic workers to ensure minimum wages, social security, and other rights.

NREGA workers

In **Haryana, Himachal and Punjab**, a campaign named Kaam Mango Abhiyan under MGNREGA was carried out and 13150 workers were supported to demand work under MGNREGA.

In **Andhra Pradesh** with support from Nisarga supported 3480 families of workers who returned to villages due to pandemic and lockdown to get 150 days employment under NREGA.

Fishers

In **Andhra Pradesh** 13 fisheries cooperative societies organised Board directors' meetings, and discussed various issues on de-siltation of Tanks, Subsidy Loans from the Government, Captive Nursery, Fish Markets establishment in Kota and chittamuru mandals.

In **North East**, 200 small and marginal fisher families build capacities on backyard fisheries and collectivize into Fish Producers Cooperatives.

Bonded labour

ActionAid continued engaging with Bonded Labour across 6 states Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Panjab and Tamil Nadu with the focus on the rescue and rehabilitation of those caught in bonded labour through supporting them and building their capacities. We mobilised around 14500 labours. During the year, we rescued 658 bonded labourers and 43 received released certificate across six states.

In **Uttar Pradesh** In a campaign for the bonded labourers linked them with the various government schemes 731 families received "AWAS" under CM Awas Yojana (Mukhyamantari Awas Yojana) in Maharajganj and 50 persons got the work under MNREGA (25 male and 25 female).

CHILD RIGHTS WITH FOCUS ON PUBLIC EDUCATION

As we know children are the worst affected during any disaster or crisis. Amidst the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic many families have lost and are still losing their livelihoods and employment. This is further leading to food crisis, malnutrition, impact on physical and emotional wellbeing. The inability of moving out due to the prevailing situation and socializing further increased the frustration among the children. In the pandemic children are facing increased levels of deprivation and multiple forms of violence, especially those from marginalized communities. During 2020, we prioritized work around children's basic right to survival, child protection, a clean, healthy, and safe environment. We also worked with communities to ensure protection of children from atrocities and discrimination.

Major Advances

Policy engagement

At National Level

Action Aid in these difficult times of Covid has stood firm for the cause of children. As we focused on the issues of education and protection of the children, we sent out an appeal to Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi and shared the same appeal with NCPCR (National Commission for Protection of Child Rights) and all SCPCRs (State Commission for Protection of Child Rights) with recommendations on child protection, food security and education. We made a special appeal for a Special Child-Sensitive Relief package for all Children in difficult circumstances which builds on existing mechanisms at the central and state levels.

At the state level

In **Karnataka** we initiated dialogues with the Education Minister, KSCPCR (Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights) DDPI (Deputy Director of Public Education), BEO (Block

Education Officer) and concerned MLC (Member of Legislative Council) and MLA (Member of legislative assembly) to address the issue of online education due to COVID 19 as the deep digital divide proved disastrous for students from marginalised communities. Responding to asks of our strong network of civil society groups, government set a committee to investigate the continuation of learning in school education of Karnataka.

In **Andhra Pradesh** through our regular interactions with Govt line Departments, in Gudur, Naidupet and Chandra sekhar Puram, allotment of residential schools up to graduation was done for girls, during the reporting period.

Campaign

At the national level

As the pandemic has affected the overall well-being of children and enhanced the vulnerabilities and risks pertaining to care, protection, nutrition, and education of the children from marginalized families we recently launched '*Child Connect*' – a national campaign covering 3 state (**Tamil Nadu, Odisha, West Bengal**) to identify potentially vulnerable children, and support communities to ensure safe, secure, and happy childhoods for all children. Through the campaigns we were able to reach out to 35000 children on the issues on child protection, nutrition, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) as well as school infrastructure.

At the state level

Yes to school

Through our weeklong campaign followed by a workshop on No to Child Labour Yes to School in 4 districts (Shrawasti, Badaun, Lucknow and Bahraich) of **Uttar Pradesh**, we were able to spread awareness on child labour and human trafficking while highlighting the causes of child labour and child trafficking so that the participants can have the shared understanding of the child labour and anti-trafficking acts, laws and practices. In the campaign total of 900 community members, children etc. participated.

In **Rajasthan**, the campaign "Yes to school No to child marriage" was launched in collaboration with district administration to create education awareness by building children's movements towards their enrolment and retention and preventing child marriage and linking out of school girls to government open school scheme- Siksha Setu. In 8 districts a total of 6,120 registration were done under Siksha Setu scheme.

In **Tamil Nadu** alone we were able to reach 21071 children through "No to Child Marriage, no child labour and no trafficking and yes to school" campaign covering 11 districts across the state.

On the issue of Child marriage In **Bihar** and **Jharkhand** through our mass media campaign (traditional and social media) we were able to reach out directly to 373282 people and generate awareness drive and capacity building sessions.

Raising children's issues

In 9 districts of **West Bengal** (South 24 Pgs, Murshidabad, Alipurduar, Jalpauguri, Purba Maediniipur, Dakhin Dinajpur, Coochbehar, Birbhum, Malda) a campaign on Child Friendly Villages was organized, covering 110 villages. The campaign focused on an appeal by adolescent groups from different villages to their respective PRI leaders for taking steps for making the villages as child friendly villages. Keeping in view of COVID- 19 pandemic, prolonged school closure, different concerns were

raised by the children. These concerns largely highlighted the potential threat of Child Marriage and trafficking of children. The idea of the campaign was to collaborate with children and adolescent groups' members of VLCPC (Village Level Child Protection Committees) on these critical issues and appeal to PRIs (Panchayati Raj Institutions) for putting this on priority through a written appeal. The children also met the PRI leaders, wherever possible and handed over the appeal to PRI Pradhans/ members. The children collectively pledged against child marriage, pledged at PRI offices, community consultations, and carried on discussions affecting children through digital platforms.

In **Karnataka** we had initiated a public education campaign in two districts and brought out the status report of 20 schools and submitted peoples' demand to improve the government schools to the DDPI (Deputy Director of Public Education), BEO (Block Education Officer) and concerned MLC (Member of Legislative Council) and MLA (Member of legislative assembly) of the district. In another district we were able to address the issue of public schools' infrastructure successfully. While the campaign initiative was progressing in different districts the covid pandemic emergency setback our campaign initiatives.

On New Education Policy **across India**, we organized webinars with the likeminded groups with the involvement of various platforms. Also, at ground level parents and village committee members have been oriented on the New Education policy.

We have also organized scholarship campaigns in various states (for details refer to Public Finance section).

Grounded actions

Although COVID-19 induced lockdown reduced our mobility, our state and ground level team ensured that the issues of child protection, food security through ensuring home delivery of MDM (Mid-Day-Meal) and clean and safe environment for children are well taken care of. We also connected with the people through our online campaigns on the issues of school closure/merger, child labour and trafficking, child and forced marriages, issue of quality education and online education.

Through our Nai Pahal intervention in **Uttar Pradesh** we have been tracking and identifying out-of-school children focusing on the children of migrant families in the 20 intervention districts of Uttar Pradesh. So far 1, 18,288 OOSC (6-14 yrs.) out-of-school children have been identified in these districts. The data (children between the age group of 6-14 years) collected at block level is entered on SHARDA dashboard by respective (Block Resource Coordinators) BRCs. The validation of collected data is done by Block Education Officers in each intervention block.

Nai-Pahal team reached to 52329 children (including 26823 boys and 25506 girls) of 36195 families/parents from 4502 villages in Nai Pahal Intervention districts during Lockdown period.

On the issue of child marriage

ActionAid Association India has been continuously working on the issue of child marriage and Child Labour, and trafficking. The present engagement on empowering adolescents and ending child marriage is ongoing in **53 districts of 5 states (Bihar, Odisha, Rajasthan, West Bengal, and Jharkhand)**. Through the initiative, we were able to stop **1135 child marriage these districts** of above mentioned 5 states. Our approach has been to strengthen the system and develop district level action plan converging the line departments and other stakeholders. The ongoing pandemic has led to economic distress leading to a spike in violation of child rights especially child marriages in parts of the country. During the COVID 19 pandemic the project has created opportunities to go beyond the efforts of ending child marriage and work on the larger issue of child protection, reaching out to children of migrant families and other vulnerable families with social protection scheme, spread awareness on ending violence against children, initiate a process of tracking child

protection violations and support received by these children and adolescents etc. Identifying the need, we have launched ground levels campaigns on the issue of child marriage, Child labour and trafficking across our intervention areas last year.

Bridging learning gap created because of Pandemic

One of our focuses was to bridge the learning level gap of children due to pandemic. In all our intervention area we supported children's learning quality through remedial education centres. In **Assam** and **Nagaland**, the remedial education centres were especially oriented to individual needs and competencies, so that out of school younger and older children could learn the most important basic knowledge of several years of school within the shortest possible period. Also, through these centres continued to promote the artistic skills among the young children and built their understanding on ecology and motivate them to do kitchen gardening with the support of teachers.

In **Uttar Pradesh's** 20 districts towards ensuring continuity of learning of children who are enrolled in centers, a lockdown assignment was developed. The assignment consisted of basic, simple, and fun based learning. The project team and Education Volunteers have reached out to 52329 children (including 26823 boys and 25506 girls) of 36195 families/parents from 4502 villages in these districts ensuring their education and learning at home.

In **Gujarat** through Umeed center, we continued our work with Children, Adolescent Girls, Parents, Community, Social Institutions and Offices including Schools, Anganwadi, Women's Court (Nari Adalat), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to aid the holistic development. We have been able to ensure 158 children coming to the centre and participating in activity-based learning and computer classes.

In **Assam** through 13 remedial-cum-tutorial learning centres 360 children (201 girls, 149 Boys) regularly coming to our centres. During the Covid-19 Pandemic situation, as the schools were closed and children from vulnerable families could not access digital learning opportunities, the learning centres with consultation with communities' remedial centers' teachers visited to each child enrolled in the learning centre with learning materials.

In **Nagaland** and **Manipur** 219 children are benefitting through our joyful learning centers in 17 villages since covid-19 lockdown to till date. Through these centers in **Manipur** we have also provided psychosocial support to 130 adolescents.

In **Bhubaneshwar's** Kondhmal 17 free tuition centres (community teaching centers) have been established to teach the children coming from marginalized communities. In the centres more than **1478 children** are studying since lockdown period to till date.

On the issue school merger/closure

On the issue of School closure in Kondhmal district of **Bhubaneshwar** we have identified 105 schools which are about to shut down. We have oriented the SMC members and parents about this issue and as an outcome; letters have been submitted to State Governor, District Education Officer, and local MLA to reopen the schools.

Strengthening ICDS and Health Support in the time of Covid

During these difficult times of Covid we continued liaising with ICDS and Asha workers and invoking their support in providing cooked food and ration to the children and lactating mothers and pregnant women. Through these centres we had also organized awareness sessions on Covid-19 precautions.

Women's Rights: With a Focus on Women's Right to Property

The sudden lockdown to arrest spread of COVID 19 resulted in many women getting isolated, alone and vulnerable. The National Commission for Women data for this period of lockdown shows a sharp spike in complaints related to domestic violence cases when compared to previous year. It has been an established fact that locked inside the home, claustrophobic as they are, with no intention to participate in the household chores, men take out their frustration and anger on women. There is hardly any option available to women to escape the violence/harassment they face as they could not walk out of the homes under lock down conditions. Women's lives were further challenged as we found that more women lost out on income and livelihood options more than their men.

Major advances

Policy engagement

At the national level

At national Level, we held dialogue with different stakeholders to build consensus and advocate for the dedicated policy for the single women to push for a more inclusive and equitable space for the single women across India. We sent representation to various Ministries after the Social Media campaign and highlighted the need for this policy. The representations were given to following ministries of Women & Child Development and Social Justice and Empowerment. We also engaged with National Women Commission, National Human Rights Commission, National ST Commission, National SC Commission, National Minority Commission and National Legal Services Authority.

Special recommendation for the precarious group of women in sex work was shared with the National Commission of Women in the light of the pandemic, where it became very difficult for these women to survive during the lock down period. States also shared the recommendations with the various state level women's commissions. Similarly, an advisory on Single women was also prepared. We shared recommendations to minimize the adverse effects of this pandemic on Single Women.

At the state level

On formulation of single women policy, we met various state functionaries across 7 states viz, Assam, AP, Telangana, Odisha, Gujarat, Rajasthan, MP, UP, Nagaland and Manipur.

At the state level, we met the Chief Minister of the respective states, people's representatives, State Commissions, Women and Child development Ministry and Social Justice department. We also met district magistrates on this issue.

In **Uttarakhand**, we were able to submit the single women's policy with the State Authority in September 2020, through e mail, followed by on-line consultations. The zero draft was circulated after some in-puts by core committee for wider circulation to experts on the issue. All suggestions have been received and now an on-line consultation has been planned by in Feb. 2021 for finalization of the policy, which will then be officially submitted to SWC for further processing.

In **West Bengal**, Young Urban Women, members met WCD Minister Smt. Shashi Panja and shared their issues and struggles. They discussed about the safety issues at workplace, in transit, domestic spheres and academic institutions. Hon'ble Minister assured them to take actions against any such cases if reported to the Women's commission or to police. She also encouraged them to lodge cases at police stations and use the women help line.

Research and study

Rapid Assessment on Gender Responsive & Child Friendly Quarantine Centre

At the national level

At the national level , a cross-sectional research study to understand the conditions, facilities, and effects of institutional quarantine on the Women and Children.

The study was conducted across 12 states of India. In many states, we found that there were centres which did not have proper demarcations and had common halls for both men and women.

At state level

The advisory note on gender responsive quarantine center was shared with the Chief Minister of **Madhya Pradesh** through Chief Secretary. We further shared it with MP's Labor Minister, Health Minister, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister, Social Justice Minister, WCD Minister along with their Principal Secretary. We also sent the advisory to all 51 DMs of Madhya Pradesh.

Study on single women: ActionAid has conducted a study on single women in **West Bengal**, the study covered 440 single women who are from 6 different districts. The women are from diverse deprived socio-economic background, such as street vendor, domestic worker, wage worker, unemployed, and Tiger Widows of Sundarbans. The study observed that 84% of the single women are widows. More than 71% of them have dependent family members ranging from one to nine persons, which include aged person looking for regular medical care to school going children. Only 15 % of them are covered under pension scheme.

Campaigns

At National Level

ActionAid organized a social media campaign on 23rd June 2020 - International Widow Day to highlight the plight and precarious conditions of the Single Women in India. The Campaign was organized across 12 states using hashtags #Single but Not Alone and #WomensShare to highlight and bring in focus the demand and policy reforms needed for this group living a precarious life. The Campaign was quite successful and was trending on different platforms on the day.

At state level

In **Nagaland**, a Campaign on violence against women in Nagaland was conducted both online and offline as part of the 16 days of Activism. We shared our demands with the concerned authorities to adopt policies and systems that support women and girls, speed justice on all forms of violence and create safe space for women and girls. More than 1000 signatures were collected and submitted to concerned authorities along with the signatures. We are happy report that due to our sustained effort on Domestic Violence (DV) issues, people are becoming aware and are seeking assistance.

We ran a campaign on Dalit and Muslim women's rights in **Uttar Pradesh** (Muzaffarnagar and Shamli) to bring the Dalit and the Muslim women in one platform. The overarching objective was to create awareness on women's rights and build leadership on property rights. We built the capacity on women leaders who can speak on the issue of women property. We also worked extensively on enhancing the leadership qualities of women.

Campaign on Social security

In Gujarat, Ekal Nari Shakti Manch (ENSM) had been actively raising the issues related to Social Security for Single Women and demanding for an increase in their monthly pension. The *Manch* organized several campaigns on the ground, and held meetings with various government officials and submitted the memorandum of demands of single women to them.

ENSM carried out the campaign of single women's pension rights in 6 districts, 11 blocks and 78 villages. This campaign was focused on the single women whose husbands have died. This campaign was undertaken from Panchayat level to block and district level for single women's pension rights. The campaign covered 2026 widowed women and as a result of the campaign 914 widows accessed pension of Rs 1250 every month from Government and 769 women restarted receiving their pension.

Campaign against Witch-hunting

As part of our interventions towards organizing and empowering them, we have also been examining and addressing their vulnerabilities to the practice of witch-hunting. Ms. Rajulben Desai, Member, National Commission for Women (NCW), recently visited Navsari and Tapi districts of **Gujarat** along with our regional team and interacted with single women and those subjected to witch-branding. A total of 68 single women from six villages of Khergam block, Navsari, apprised her of the problems faced by them in accessing inheritance rights and other entitlements. On January 13, a similar meeting was organized in Tapi wherein 260 single women participated.

Grounded Action

In **West Bengal**, Young Urban Women- city level collective members approached Kolkata Police to ensure their safety at public and private spaces. They have interacted with the deputy Commissioner of Police –Crime Against Women Unit of Lalbazar and convinced the DCP to make functional the special women police station thus at any point of time YUWs can access the service. DCP assured them to make the Women help Line number functional and to speed up the response mechanism against any form of violence against young girls and women.

As Kolkata Police launched a program to make sanitary napkin accessible and affordable to young girls and women, thus the city level collective members took the initiative to spread that information among other young girls and women

In **Odisha**, three Panchayat level groups of single women have been formed at Meghapal, Chhamunda and Kansar Gram Panchayats in Kondhmal. Antaranga volunteers have taken an initiative to train 455 numbers of women farmers from seven blocks. All the participants are from 371 SHGs. At present 484 farmers are practicing sustainable agriculture and covers an area of 477 acres.

In **Tamil Nadu**, through our continuous efforts, 40 women saltpan workers have asserted their property rights and leased 1 acre each (totally 40 acres) of saltpan lands and those who were once daily wage labourers now work in their own saltpans.

In **Andhra Pradesh**, 96 out of 120 are single women received homestead land in their name. We facilitated 328 single women to apply for YSR single women pension scheme in two districts through AP volunteers, SHG leaders and other stake holders. Through this program, 319 women are getting a pension of Rs 1500/- a month

In **Uttar Pradesh**, on February 14, the city of Varanasi, got a new café, '*The Orange Café and Restaurant*', symbolizing a brighter future that's free of violence, the colour orange serves as a means of demonstrating solidarity in eliminating all forms of violence. This café is owned, run and managed by a group of acid attack survivors from the state. Ms. Mridula Jaiswal, the mayor of Varanasi, graced the inauguration as the chief guest and applauded the initiative.

In **Uttarakhand**, a collective of women farmers organized those raising issues of women farmers. The cooperative of women formers already registered. These efforts have been done to increase the low-cost agriculture practices in the area, strengthen women farmers and increase livelihood options for them. In Andhra Pradesh, we initiated our work with 80 women farmers.

In **Gujarat**, ENSM has been raising the concern for expanding the coverage of Single Women Pension with the authorities concerned. There were 26 single women whose pension forms were approved but were not receiving any assistance from the state. We engaged with the administration and helped the single women to discuss their issue . This resulted in Women have received an amount between Rs 5000 to 7000 in their account. The issue is being followed up for rest of the single women eligible for state assistance

In **Odisha**, together with the University of Kassel, we recently carried out a study on witch-hunting in three high-prevalence districts, namely Ganjam, Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar. As part of this exercise, we collected case stories from within the communities and facilitated community discussions, interviewing those concerned. In this context, we organized a workshop in Bhubaneswar on January 27 to share the findings emerging from this study. Dr. Minati Behera, Chairperson, Odisha State Commission for Women (OSCW), was also present.

We also conducted a study on witch-branding in **Assam, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Meghalaya**. Altogether, 40 case stories in Assam and 13 case stories in Meghalaya were carried out to understand the impacts of witch branding in the society as a whole and especially on women. It was found that causing illness was one of the major factors followed by issues related to land and jealousy were the main causes for witch branding.

Run with support from UNFPA, we implemented an initiative on fighting Gender Based Violence together with *Astitva Samajik Sansthan* and *Alwar Mewat Institute of Education Development* (AMIED) in **Uttar Pradesh** and **Rajasthan** respectively. The districts above were chosen basis their low child sex-ratio, gender gap in literacy and early marriage practices. Covering a total of 400 villages from across these districts, the '*Yeh Kahani Badalni Hai*' ('*Let's Change the Narrative*') programme had worked towards sensitizing communities on gender inequality and enabled them to question and challenge the existing discriminatory norms. A pivotal role in this initiative has been played by the community-based youth. Through our efforts, we have been able to bring about several positive behavioural changes within the communities. In 379 of the 400 intervention villages, the birth of girl children is now a moment of celebration and so are their birthdays! 296 of these villages witnessed a shift in the distribution of household chores, with many men now coming forward to share household responsibilities with women. The incidence of domestic violence and alcoholism have also reported a considerable decline in 223 villages. In 214 villages, several menstrual taboos have been broken. Furthermore, 260 villages saw girls who had dropped out after

Class V or VIII being readmitted to school now, with girls from 197 villages in fact even moving to other villages or urban centres to access education. In 146 intervention villages, the practice of child marriage has been prohibited, and the community members are monitoring any instances of its violation.

Public Finance

We are working on Public Finance in six states including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan. Taking strong note of prevailing situation created by the pandemic, AA felt the need of restructuring the budget and allocation of resources by the states in an equitable manner - akin to the role of a Welfare State and, collectively resolved to build on ongoing work, namely, scholarship campaign, advocacy for enactment of separate legislation for SCSP/TSP etc. The analysis of MNREGA budget, however, came up as the new area of reflection and action through the collective process.

Major Advances

Policy Advances

State Level

In **Uttar Pradesh**, we have extensively created awareness on specific Multi-sectoral Development Programme (MSDP) & Schedule Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) schemes not only with the community but also with the government officials informing them about this specific scheme for the minorities. Due to our efforts, community members and village volunteers have started asking for schools, scholarships and drainage facilities in their areas under the MSDP & SCSP schemes.

In **Andhra Pradesh/Telangana**, we ensured Stay Order on Govt. take Over Plan of big tanks for fisheries. The State Government has announced that big tanks in the district will be taken back by the Government for fisheries development under pilot project. We worked to get around 27 water sources listed for the pilot project in Nellore district for Somsila dam, Kanigiri reservoir, Kandaleru reservoir, Survepalli reservoir and Pennkammathalli tank. The tribal fisheries Cooperative societies mobilized and gave representations to the Government line departments Tahasildar, Sub-collector, MLA, District Collector, AD fisheries, JD fisheries but the issue was not solved and therefore we are following up. The society's members approached the High court and got a stay on the pilot project and the High court gave order to continue the water sources to the societies for the people's welfare.

Campaigns

Act for Scholarship: Helping Students Secure Scholarships

To enable children from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, minorities and other marginalized communities to complete their education, the Union and State Governments have put in place several scholarship schemes. However, there is also a lack of awareness among students on the available schemes.

We ran the 'Act for Scholarship' campaign across several states to inform students on various scholarship schemes. We associated with community-based organizations, frontline workers and volunteers. We held meetings with students, parents and officials of the relevant government departments; displayed informative posters; and distributed pamphlets to spread awareness on the various scholarship programmes. These trained volunteers also encouraged students to fill up scholarship applications and actively helped them in the process. Given the limitations in terms of reaching out to large numbers of students through physical meetings amid the ongoing pandemic, we also organized interactive webinars with students and parents on scholarship schemes.

As part of this campaign, we were able to reach out to more than 16,100 students from 28 districts of Uttar Pradesh; 15,000 students from eight districts of Haryana; nearly 11,350 students from four districts of Rajasthan; 5,000 students from six districts of Punjab; 2,500 students from five districts of Delhi-National Capital Region; and 2,500 students from four districts of Himachal Pradesh. A total of 21,232 students across these states were supported by our volunteers in filling up their scholarship applications.

Grounded Actions

In **Gujarat**, we monitored Mid-Day Meal ration distribution scheme for children covering 5710 children from 28 schools and followed-up online tutorial for children with parents in 28 villages.

Atleast 455 Households got 100 days employment with minimum wage of Rs 202 per day – In all villages we ensured facilities like cold drinking water and first aid kit, keeping social distancing and all precautions to deal with COVID-19 (Mask and sanitizer).

In **Maharashtra**, information about employment guarantee scheme was disseminated and reached to around 5000 people through leaflets. In villages where there are no Rozgar Sevaks, the process for appointment of Rozgar Sevak's has started. Through PRA women came together and initiated enlisting for employment guarantee.

In Maharashtra, renovation and repairing work of classroom were completed properly in 7 schools in 6 villages. Mid-day meals could reach to all children in ZP schools of 20 villages during Covid-19 epidemic. We made available educational materials to the 324 children.

In **Andhra Pradesh and Telangana**, we facilitated processes in ST Sub Plan implementation for Yanadi tribe. This will ensure that STs would be able to avail 90% subsidy on govt livelihood schemes (auto, cycles, fishing nets, cars, mopeds, ice boxes, etc). We got separate residential schools for ST girls up to graduation.

We provided youth skill training centres for Yanadis. A Govt. order has been issued for NREGA advance payment for the Yanadi tribes. We formed Yanadi Shrama Shakti Sanghas

A new Executive Committee has been elected in **Andhra Pradesh** during Annual General body meetings in four cooperative societies. Board Directors meetings were conducted in 13 fisheries cooperative societies and discussed on de-siltation of Tanks, Subsidy Loans from the Government, Captive Nursery, Fish Markets establishment in Kota and Chittamuru mandals. We got 200 members of Fisheries Cooperative Society members' fisheries Identity Card for fishing. For the remaining members it is in the process.

In **Uttar Pradesh**, by building linkages with the government schemes, we continue to rehabilitate IDPs & Dalit families with constant intervention to ensure basic needs during lockdown through the

delivery of essential services. This resulted in 359 women and 251 men getting 15 days work under MNREGA.

In IDP colonies we had discussions on delivery of basic services which led to electricity connection, homes having shauchalaya schemes and handpumps being reboared.

In **Tamil Nadu**, a scholarship campaign was carried out in 10 schools project in Nagapattinam district. Through this campaign schoolteachers, members of the school management committee (SMC), Parent Teachers Association (PTA), and local community were sensitized on the educational scholarship schemes available for children from the primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels. The amount of funds allocated by the central and state governments for each categories; i.e. Backward Classes, Most Backward classes, Scheduled castes, Scheduled tribes and minorities were inculcated through this campaign. Through the campaign, totally **1,646 children** and 40 teachers have been reached out.

Just, Inclusive, and Liveable Urban spaces

We are working in atleast five states to make urban spaces just, inclusive and liveable for the urban poor. Our policy interventions and grounded actions for entitlement has been very promising. Loan waiver for homes in the slums, slum declaration, affordable housing policy, draft Comprehensive Slum Law 2018, land entitlement, shelter for the homeless and access to schemes and entitlements are some of the interventions. In Rajasthan we worked for the NT/DNT community to get their habitation approved for in-situ rehabilitation.

Major Advances

Policy Advances

State Level

In **Karnataka**, we negotiated with the slum board to waive off the loan of homes constructed by slum board 2014-2015. Our efforts contributed to 44 slums being declared as slums out of 112 applications submitted.

We supported in organizing the voices from South India and facilitated the meeting with UN Rapporteur on Adequate Housing. We also contributed oureedback on affordable housing policy and New Urban Agenda 2016.

We also actively participated and contributed to influencing Slum Policy 2016 and continued our efforts to enact a draft Comprehensive Slum Law 2018.

We were successful in the negotiations with the State in passing a Govt. Order for land entitlement to slum dwellers in 2020.

Grounded Actions

In 12 districts of **Karnataka** we facilitated issues of deprived voices to be represented in health, education, food, entitlements & governance related issues with departments and other political spaces.

Nearly 20,000 families were facilitated with housing constructed by slum board. Around 300 Homeless families were supported to access housing in Bengaluru; 2 slums have got an allocation of land by Bengaluru District Commissioner.

We supported in reserving 90 acres land for Urban Deprived Communities assigned to Slum Board

A public hearing on the impact on lives of communities due to slum dwellers rendered homeless and slums under threat was facilitated with video documentation of the voices.

We made efforts towards representation in Ward Committees for effective implementation of the 74th amendment. It has been very challenging due to internal politics and political power with vested interests.

Peace, Justice and Human Security

ActionAid Association has, for long, been working for the rights and safety of minorities across the country. These communities have been disadvantaged and vulnerable and continue to live in deprivation and backwardness – socially, educationally as well as economically. Efforts to ensure their socio-economic well-being, safety, security and overall empowerment have been at the centre of all our interventions. We have been actively working towards ensuring that the benefits of various government schemes and entitlements reach the most disadvantaged among the minority communities. We have been standing in solidarity with them in their struggle for equality and justice.

Our major work on Peace and Justice has happened mainly in Uttar Pradesh and Odisha. In Uttar Pradesh, particularly in Shamli and Muzaffarnagar Districts, we run a campaign on Peace Building and Human Security to maintain peace in villages that were stricken by violence in 2013. In Odisha, we organize monthly meetings of youth at Antaranga clubs to disseminate literature on pluralism. We bring all the youth in one platform to inspire them for constructive leadership with a well-planned development strategy.

More recently, in the wake of violence in North-East Delhi in February 2020, our teams were almost immediately on the ground and responding. We helped assess the nature and extent of damage suffered by local communities and worked out ways to rebuild lives and livelihoods, besides trying to restore amity. We also reached out with relief material to the worst-affected families.

Major Advances

ActionAid Association receives *Best NGO Award* from *Delhi Minorities Commission*

ActionAid Association was felicitated with '*Best NGO Award 2019*' by the *Delhi Minorities Commission*. Tanveer Kazi, leading ActionAid Association's North India office, has been presented the '*Supporters of Minorities Award 2019*'.

Grounded Actions

In **Uttar Pradesh**, we run a campaign on Peace Building & Human Security to maintain peace in villages that were stricken by violence in 2013, spreading understanding of pluralism and cultural diversity among mixed youth, and building cultural interventions to promote peace and harmony by creating awareness of constitutional values and composite cultures in mixed communities, particularly in Shamli and Muzaffarnagar Districts.

Emergencies

The humanitarian crisis caused by the ongoing pandemic left marginalized communities in a state of extreme distress. While coping with the COVID-induced crisis, several states in our country had to face other natural disasters too. From time to time, we shared regular updates on how we have been standing together with the most vulnerable amid these extreme circumstances. We reached out to the worst-hit by the COVID-19 crisis across the country, including the families severely affected in the states battered by floods and cyclones.

Major Advances

Policy Advances

National

We have been providing grounded inputs from the perspective of workers and vulnerable communities to the various policy and programme processes of Union and State Governments. Sandeep Chachra, our Executive Director, has also been included on an expert committee set up by the *National Human Rights Commission* (NHRC) to assess the impact of the pandemic on human rights of people, especially the marginalized and vulnerable sections. The committee would suggest a response based on which the NHRC plans to issue necessary advisories to the relevant institutions of the Governments. Our recommendations were put together keeping in mind the multiple vulnerabilities of informal workers amid the COVID-19 context and the immediate as well as long-term support needed by them.

We provided grounded inputs from vulnerable communities' perspective to the various policy and programme processes of Union and State Governments. Earlier this year, as part of our response, we had reached out to the COVID-19 Economic Response Task Force, led by the Finance Minister, with our suggestions. We also offered all support to the High-Level Committee for Engagement of Private Sector, International Organizations, CSOs/NGOs and other Development Partners constituted by the Government of India, under the Chairmanship of CEO, NITI Aayog. The [NITI Aayog also commended the work done by non-governmental and civil society organizations, including ActionAid Association, as part of the COVID-19 response](#). Also, we brought out a series of documents titled '*Isolate. Don't Abandon*', capturing our recommendations on the most vulnerable groups, for Union and State Governments and the district administrations to consider.

Research & Studies

Workers in the Time of COVID-19: Round 1 of Our National Study on Informal Workers

People dependent on the informal economy have been hardest hit in the wake of the economic crisis coming with the ongoing pandemic. To develop a deeper understanding of how the economic crisis is manifesting in their lives, we conducted a survey with more than 11,500 informal workers across 20 states during the third phase of the nationwide lockdown. Almost 60 per cent of the respondents are migrant workers. The first in a series of a multi-round longitudinal study, the survey shows pre-existing vulnerabilities of the respondents, the impact of the lockdown on livelihoods and wages, and the access workers had to relief and entitlements. '*Workers in the Time of COVID-19*' also deals with the status of housing, indebtedness, and access to food, water and healthcare, all factors that have wide-ranging and long-term implications for workers' health and well-being.

Out of the 11,537 respondents, over three-fourths reported that they had lost their livelihood since the imposition of the lockdown. Close to half of the respondents said that they had not received any

wages and about 17 per cent had received only partial wages. Furthermore, people's access to essential services took a big hit. Only about a sixth of the respondents reported that their food consumption was "sufficient", a significant decline from before the lockdown when 83 per cent of them believed that their food consumption was sufficient. Besides, nearly three-fourths of the respondents said that they could not access healthcare when they needed to during the lockdown.

In the second round of the national survey in September, we documented the continuing distress amongst informal workers. We found that nearly half of the 16,961 respondents were unemployed, and one-fourth had zero wages. Around 42 per cent of those who said that they were rendered unemployed by the lockdown when we spoke to them during the first round in May, remained unemployed nearly four months later in September.

Out of those who were employed, a majority were either working fewer hours than they were before the lockdown or were finding work occasionally. Many have had to move to alternate sources of livelihood, most prominently from construction and manufacturing to agriculture. There was thus a worsening situation of underemployment. Simultaneously, the quality of jobs was deteriorating. There has been a notable shift from regular work to casual work and casual workers have reported significantly lower protections at work. Significantly, wages have remained worryingly low during the unlock phase. Almost half of the respondents were earning less than Rs 5,000 per month. Only about eight per cent were earning more than Rs 10,000 per month. Moreover, there was a huge gender disparity in wages. The average monthly wage earned by women was much lower than that by men across all major occupational categories in our sample, including agriculture labour, construction work, manufacturing work, sanitation work, street vending, hotel or restaurant work, and fish work.

Grounded Actions

Since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in India in March, leading to a humanitarian crisis, our teams have been on the ground, tirelessly reaching out with support to those most in need. Our response has been at multiple levels. **As on August 15, 2020, we have been able to provide and enable much-needed relief materials to 77,12,980 individuals belonging to vulnerable communities and groups across 24 states and one Union Territory.** This was accomplished by working with volunteers, community-based organizations, movements, directly and with the help of local administration. The people we served include those dependent on the informal economy, Dalits, Muslims, particularly vulnerable tribal groups, de-notified tribes, nomadic tribes, people living with HIV and people with disabilities, with a focus on women and children among them. We have directly supported 23,55,346 individuals with relief materials, such as dry ration, cooked food and sanitation supplies, among other forms of relief. We have also facilitated access to government relief and schemes for 53,57,634 individuals.

Our teams also provided '*Relief in Transit*' to migrant workers returning from the cities where they were walking to their native villages. We enabled their registration for a safe return home. We ran hubs on highways and roads across several states of the country to provide migrants on the road with water, food, footwear and first aid during their journey back home. In some states, we have also been engaged in facilitating and monitoring of quarantine facilities. To identify gaps in the quarantine system and related protocols, we recently carried out a study covering 765 quarantine centres across 14 states. We will bring you the findings of this study through our next edition, and we hope that it would help strengthen the quarantine system and services further.

Floods in Assam and Bihar. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Assam and Bihar had to witness devastating floods. With villages inundated, crops ruined, and houses and other community infrastructure damaged, people in these states needed urgent support. Our teams in both these

states were immediately on the ground, standing in solidarity with those worst affected and providing them humanitarian support.

In **Assam**, we have been distributing relief material to the worst-hit households across the districts of Barpeta, Dhemaji, Dhubri, Golaghat and Morigaon. So far, we have distributed hygiene kits to 1,558 families across these districts and tarpaulins to 272 of them to help them cover the damaged roofs of their huts. Besides, we have reached out to 960 families with feed for their cattle. We have also constructed temporary toilets in Barpeta. We are ensuring people's access to potable drinking water through iron removal handpumps in Barpeta and Morigaon. Also, to minimize the risk of water-borne infections, our teams carried out decontamination of drinking water sources, and cleaning drives in relief camps and flood-hit villages. Awareness campaigns on the precautions to be taken to prevent COVID-19 infection and on how to stay safe were organized for children across all intervention districts.

Braving cyclones and floods amidst Pandemic

During the struggle with this unprecedented pandemic, the states of **West Bengal**, **Odisha** and **Maharashtra** and **Tamil Nadu** witnessed devastating cyclones, **Assam** and **Bihar** had to bear the brunt of catastrophic floods. While we provided relief materials, we also provided livelihood support.

Amphan majorly affected districts were South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas, East Medinipore and Kolkata. In Odisha Amphan affected 10 districts (Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapada, Jagatsinghpur, Mayurbhanj, Cuttack, Jajpur, Keonjhar, Khordha, and Puri).

In West Bengal, the cyclone affected 340 most marginalized households

In **Tamil Nadu** Nivar and Burevi Cyclone - After the Nivar and Burevi cyclonic storms women in the relocation sites of Perumbakkam and Chemmanchery were very affected, post disaster relief was carried out through the DPRF Fund and the method of relief adopted was cash transfer. The process of cash transfer was done over a period of 1 month after collecting bank account details and case studies of the beneficiaries. Aadhar number copies were also collected to verify and then the transaction was done. Through the DPRF Fund we have reached 617 women beneficiaries from both the areas.

As part of our efforts to support the communities affected by floods in **Bihar**, we have so far distributed dry ration kits and masks to 400 worst-hit families in Samastipur and 355 such families in Muzaffarpur. Besides, we reached out with ration support to 200 vulnerable families each in the districts of East Champaran and Sitamarhi. We simultaneously sensitized the communities on the need to maintain cleanliness and hygiene to prevent water-borne infections and the spread of COVID-19. Besides, our volunteers are facilitating access of community members to the various government welfare schemes.

Following the loss of livelihoods amid the COVID-induced economic distress, we saw visuals of massive reverse migration as lakhs of migrant workers started heading back to their villages.

Responding to the crisis, our teams across the country have initiated efforts to enable them to earn a living, including planning collective livelihoods and enterprises. In rural areas, the *Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act* (MGNREGA) is a major source of livelihood for communities. Through a campaign together with our allies and volunteers, we have so far been able to enable 1,31,427 individuals to access work under MGNREGA across Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Odisha, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

In **West Bengal**, the livelihood support was targeted to 310 Households of the three identified villages of Kultali block in West Bengal. The families of single women, elderly women, tribal and minority households were prioritized in the intervention framework. As impact of the Cyclone

Amphan these families lost their livelihood assets and income. So in the livelihood support program livestock support - fish-lings (for the families those have ponds for fish farming), chicks and ducks, materials to feed and treat the chicks and ducks were also included.

In **Odisha**, as part of our livelihood-regeneration efforts, we have provided kitchen garden and seed support to a total of 879 families across the districts of Bargarh, Kandhamal, Nuapada and Sundargarh. Also, 164 families in Nuapada were supported with bamboo seedlings.

Gauravi, the one-stop crisis centre run in **Madhya Pradesh** for survivors of violence with the *Women and Child Development Department* of the Government of Madhya Pradesh, is creating livelihood opportunities for survivors. In collaboration with *Studio Jammin*, women survivors made face masks in huge numbers and are selling them through *Studio Jammin*.

Women led Protection and Psycho-Social Support Group in Tamil Nadu

A group of 30 members were identified to be part of the Women-Led Protection Mechanism and Psycho-Social Support from both the relocation areas. The women were oriented on the Humanitarian Approach of ActionAid and how Women led Community Based Protection Groups should function in time of emergencies. This group will be the first line responder when it comes to extending Psycho-Social Support to women whenever required and also to take forward their needs and requirements to ensure safety and protection in time of disaster is the ultimate aim of the same.

In both Semmancherry and Perumbakkam relocation sites in **Tamil Nadu**, totally 617 beneficiaries were supported through direct cash transfer and 30 women are part of the Women led protection mechanism.

How Community Radio Supported Communities During the Pandemic Together with *Young India* and *Radio Namaskar*, we brought out a publication, '*Community Radio for Change*', capturing the best practices of community radios through 42 case stories from 24 states of India. This also included the support extended to communities during the COVID-19 crisis.

Radio Namaskar, based in Puri, **Odisha**, ran a campaign, '*Say no to Corona*', with 100 radio episodes to empower local communities with information on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Capacity-building of 120 radio listener groups was done and they subsequently played a crucial role in awareness generation, focusing on a variety of issues including the condition of migrant labourers, violence against women and child marriage.

Radio Surabhi in Nayagarh, **Odisha**, during the pandemic, ran an initiative, *Sikshya Surabhi*, as part of which special education programmes were designed and broadcast for visually impaired students.

In Dharamshala, **Himachal Pradesh**, *Gunjan Radio* was broadcasting 12-hours live programme and 12-hours recorded programme to keep people informed about the situation of the pandemic. They also created a WhatsApp group comprising local government officials and volunteers. As the volunteers placed people's issues on the group, the local authorities were working towards addressing the same. More than 150 people were supported during the lockdown.

Other Interventions

Human Rights Defenders Promoting Social and Ecological Justice

With support from the European Commission, we have been running an initiative across a eight districts in Bihar, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh to protect and promote the rights of Dalits, minorities and De-Notified Tribes (DNTs). Covering 170 villages, this programme is working since 2018 to enhance access to justice, basic services and welfare schemes for discriminated

communities through dialogues with relevant authorities, capacity-building of communities and community-led monitoring of implementation of laws, policies and services.

164 community support groups with more than 2,600 members across the four states have also been formed and oriented at the village-level to monitor and investigate cases of discrimination and atrocities, including discrimination in schools, health centres and welfare schemes. Between May 2018 and December 2020, 317 cases of caste and religion-based discrimination and atrocities have been brought to the attention of authorities. Community-based HRDs carried out fact-finding missions and helped victims report to the police, besides providing them counselling and rehabilitation support.

We have, so far, been able to facilitate government compensation of Rs. 2,57,06,700 for 93 victims of atrocities. As part of this intervention, we have been actively engaging with national as well as state-level Human Rights Commissions, Minority Commissions, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commissions, and Women's Commissions.

Furthermore, the HRDs under our programme have been able to support more than 12,350 households across the four intervention states to apply for government welfare schemes, especially under the Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan (SCSP) and the Multi-Sectoral Development Plan (MSDP).

Following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the HRDs actively supported the distribution of relief material among those in need. Through 32 webinars in 2020, we were also able to orient over 15,000 individuals on the various entitlements and helped several of them access the same.

As part of this initiative, a Draft Special Component Plan for Scheduled Caste Development Authorities Bill has been prepared and shared with the **Bihar** Legislative Assembly and Uttar **Pradesh** Legislative Assembly for enactment.

Our efforts had a role to play in getting *The Rajasthan Protection from Lynching Bill, 2019*, passed by the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly. Besides, a Model Law for Muslims and a Model Rehabilitation Policy for DNTs have been drafted following intensive discussions with concerned academicians, social activists and policymakers. In addition, a bill for the protection of Human Rights Defenders was drafted and tabled as a Private Member's Bill in the Parliament of India.

Comprehensive Assistance to urban refugees in Uttar Pradesh-Aligarh and Mathura

In **Uttar Pradesh**, we are engaging with refugees in Mathura and Aligarh district of Uttar Pradesh. In Aligarh there are 90 family refugees, a total of 132 families are living in a very poor condition. As they do not possess any basic entitlements thus unable to access government schemes and programs. But our engagement with government schools and hospitals has resulted in 21 Children getting admitted in government schools. A total of 107 of children enrolled in accelerated learning programmes (remedial class, tuition), pregnant and lactating mother and other members of the community are availing Healthcare facilities from nearby government hospital as well. Cash grants have been provided.

In Aligarh and Mathura, most of the refugees and asylum seekers are rag pickers in Mathura and in Aligarh they are daily wage labour. The Covid-19 pandemic govt. of India announces lockdown from last week of march-2020 due to this food crisis emerging in the community. In this year after lockdown from April to December, 7 month dry ration was distributed in Aligarh and Mathura a total of 1008 ration kits were distributed to families. A total of 909 Sanitary materials kits were distributed to women in 2020.