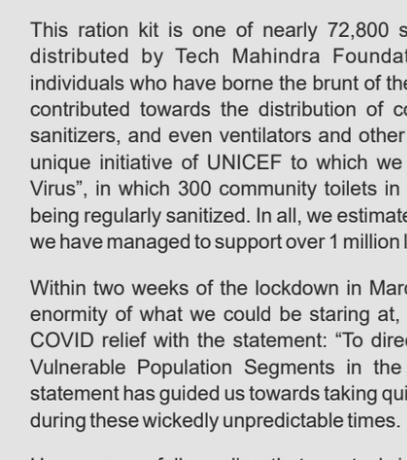


KEYNOTE

Dear Friends

A few weeks ago, a colleague sent me this picture that you see below. It is of Jyotsna Sikdar, 79, lives in Sonagachi in Kolkata, was sold off by her husband many years ago, and now runs a tea stall in the locality along with her 50-year old daughter. They have no savings to fall back upon, whatsoever. Along with the pic was a small, heartwarming message that read, "I can assure you that this ration kit is helping some of the most vulnerable and severely impacted people in COVID times".



Jyotsna Sikdar
A TMF Beneficiary of COVID-19

This ration kit is one of nearly 72,800 such kits that have so far been distributed by Tech Mahindra Foundation, benefitting over 340,000 individuals who have borne the brunt of the pandemic. In addition, we have contributed towards the distribution of cooked meals, PPE kits, masks, sanitizers, and even ventilators and other medical supplies to hospitals. A unique initiative of UNICEF to which we contributed is called "Flush the Virus", in which 300 community toilets in slums of Mumbai and Pune are being regularly sanitized. In all, we estimate that over the last seven months, we have managed to support over 1 million lives in 14 states of India.

Within two weeks of the lockdown in March this year, we had gauged the enormity of what we could be staring at, and had articulated our goal for COVID relief with the statement: "To direct the support towards the Most Vulnerable Population Segments in the Quickest Possible Time." This statement has guided us towards taking quick decisions and staying focused during these wickedly unpredictable times.

However, we fully realize that our task is like a drop in the ocean. The aftermath of the pandemic will be faced by communities and the society in the years to come. We are gearing ourselves for that: introducing reskilling & upskilling in our employability programs, providing learning devices to students who have been cut off from learning, experimenting with assistive technology in our work with Persons with Disabilities, and launching new initiatives. One such initiative is our new aggregator platform called [Mind@Ease](#), which brings together a host of counsellors in the fields of Mental Wellness, Careers, and Family & Relationships – the first such aggregator in India in the social sector. You can get to know more about this portal in this issue of Samvaad.

This issue focuses on Tech Mahindra Foundation's response to COVID and brings to you a few more stories of hope and resilience such as that of Jyotsna's. We draw inspiration from these – and each life that gets supported redoubles our resolve of continually Rising to the need of the hour.

With best wishes of peace & well-being for each one of us.

Chetan Kapoor
Chief Operating Officer
Tech Mahindra Foundation

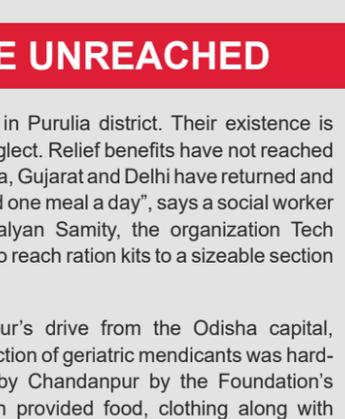
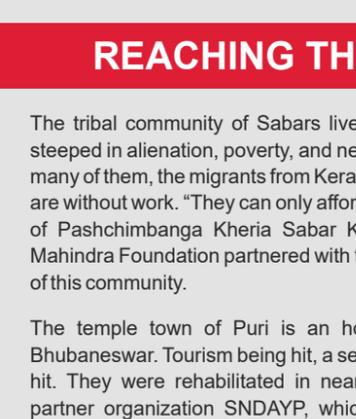
RELIEF, RECOVERY, REBUILDING

Since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic in India, the focus of Tech Mahindra Foundation has been on attending to immediate relief requirements, from providing supplies to migrants to giving targeted support to end-beneficiaries. The pandemic has unleashed an unprecedented crisis on multiple fronts: Healthcare, Livelihoods, Education, and the Society in general, that has affected all of us directly or indirectly.

Covid Relief Activities

TMF works with some of the most vulnerable communities - from persons with disabilities, transgenders, the homeless, daily wage workers, migrant workers, and the urban poor, and for many of them, TMF has been the only source of succour during the ongoing phase. The COVID-19-induced lockdowns disrupted the livelihoods of many and put them in dire straits unable to afford food or essential hygiene items such as soaps, masks, and sanitizers.

As the domino effect of the coronavirus continued, TMF team knew much more was needed to be done to mitigate the fallout of the epidemic. Working on the frontlines, TMF staff and CSR project heads across the 11 cities came under one umbrella to provide food, rations, and hygiene kits to the poor and the needy. TMF continues to serve the nation and has touched over 10 lakh lives through its COVID relief work across the country. Of this, 340,000 people have been supported with dry ration kits, 1,78,000 cooked meals distributed, over 29,000 PPE kits were distributed to the frontline workers. Also, 305 community toilets sanitized used by 3,05,000 beneficiaries and 14 hospitals have been supported with ventilators, medical equipments and other consumables, as on 15 October 2020.



Employment of Youth

The outbreak has had a significant impact on vulnerable and marginalized populations. The activities that sustain the economy, primarily farming and small-scale industry that employ more than half the workforce of the country, are badly hit. Uncertainty looms large on the future of youth in these affected communities. Without timely support, it will be hard for them to achieve financial security in the long run. TMF is working relentlessly to overcome this and provide employability skills and opportunities to youth in these locations, by introducing Reskilling & Upskilling options in its skilling portfolio. We have also facilitated mental health support to its youth beneficiaries to help cope with these stressful times.

Spreading Awareness

Another area where TMF along with its partner ecosystem has stepped in is in the spread of awareness and authentic information related to COVID-19 restrictions and prevention measures. An awareness campaign was launched early on, and included counselling services, creation of posters and digital media campaigns. As NGO partners are trusted by the communities where they work, they have been helping people to combat the crisis, while distributing water containers for hand-washing, providing shelter, and setting up community kitchens for those in need.

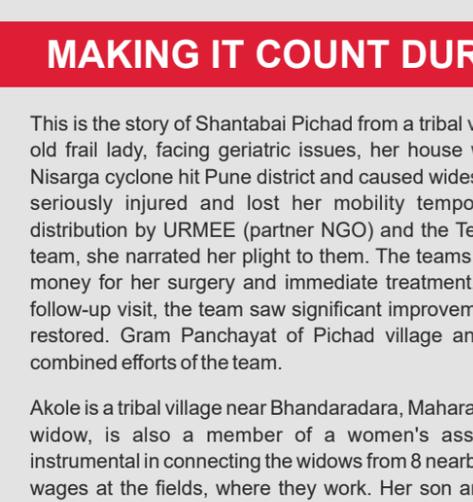
REACHING THE UNREACHED

The tribal community of Sabars live in Purulia district. Their existence is steeped in alienation, poverty, and neglect. Relief benefits have not reached many of them, the migrants from Kerala, Gujarat and Delhi have returned and are without work. "They can only afford one meal a day", says a social worker of Pashchimbanga Kheria Sabar Kalyan Samity, the organization Tech Mahindra Foundation partnered with to reach ration kits to a sizeable section of this community.

The temple town of Puri is an hour's drive from the Odisha capital, Bhubaneswar. Tourism being hit, a section of geriatric mendicants was hard-hit. They were rehabilitated in nearby Chandanpur by the Foundation's partner organization SNDAYP, which provided food, clothing along with therapy support for the disabled. At the same time, the Foundation supported with cooked meals and sanitization consumables.

It wasn't business as usual at TMF this year as our worlds shrunk to home-offices with the pandemic. The need of the hour was to put in place a robust and effective framework with which the foundation would respond to the COVID crisis.

The three core themes of "Rise" - the word that epitomizes the Mahindra philosophy - guided the Foundation in its approach to COVID relief. "Accepting no limits", TMF decided to support the most vulnerable population segments in the fastest possible time. Frontline healthcare personnel, sanitation workers, migrants and daily wage earners and householders at the bottom of the pyramid were focussed upon. The Foundation maximized relief to as many beneficiaries with the available resources. Along with its partner organizations, support was extended to many small organizations working across the country. "Alternative thinking", helped us come up with a quick turnaround system cutting all bureaucratic delay, the teams did due-diligence on key thematic areas, operational geographies, financial transparency and overall governance. The team at the Foundation responded with dry ration kits, cooked meals, PPE kits, support to hospitals with medical equipment and consumables, sanitization of community toilets, in keeping with the mantra of "Driving positive change" in these unprecedented times.



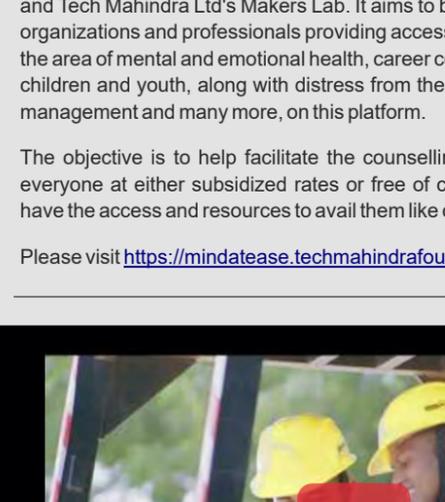
MAKING IT COUNT DURING COVID

This is the story of Shantabai Pichad from a tribal village in Maharashtra. An old frail lady, facing geriatric issues, her house was destroyed when the Nisarga cyclone hit Pune district and caused widespread damage. She was seriously injured and lost her mobility temporarily. During the relief distribution by URMEE (partner NGO) and the Tech Mahindra Foundation team, she narrated her plight to them. The teams came together, collected money for her surgery and immediate treatment. Two months later, on a follow-up visit, the team saw significant improvement and her mobility was restored. Gram Panchayat of Pichad village and her family lauded the combined efforts of the team.

Akole is a tribal village near Bhandaradara, Maharashtra. Sulabai Asawale, a widow, is also a member of a women's association and has been instrumental in connecting the widows from 8 nearby villages to provide them wages at the fields, where they work. Her son an employee in hospitality industry lost his job like many others in this sector. Both mother and son lost their wages in this crisis. Having interviewed her during the ration kit support drive TMF team learnt that no other help had reached their remote village. Doctors did come once a month. Having run out of food, they were appreciative of the efforts of the team at Tech Mahindra and the partner NGO. Now the team is striving to find a suitable livelihood for her son.



AN ONLINE COUNSELLING PLATFORM MIND@EASE



Mind@Ease is a collaborative venture between Tech Mahindra Foundation and Tech Mahindra Ltd's Makers Lab. It aims to bring reputed and dedicated organizations and professionals providing accessible counselling services in the area of mental and emotional health, career counselling and well-being of children and youth, along with distress from the pandemic and relationship management and many more, on this platform.

The objective is to help facilitate the counselling services to anyone and everyone at either subsidized rates or free of cost, especially, who do not have the access and resources to avail them like others.

Please visit <https://mindatease.techmahindrafoundation.org/>



Watch the corporate brand film of Tech Mahindra Foundation

Samvaad is a quarterly e-newsletter. You can participate by writing an article or sharing your project experiences with us. If you have

Please e-mail us your thoughts and ideas at samvaad@techmahindrafoundation.org

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