

“Things done well and with care exempt themselves from fear”- Creating Awareness on COVID 19.

A Self Help Group of 13 rural women under a federation named Udan Mahila Manch , took the responsibility of serving their community. Beena Devi from Kishangarh Bas , a community Shakhi with Spectra Organisation and a member of the Udan Mahila Manch in her village started creating awareness on COVID 19. Beena Devi visited in their village and nearby hamlets along with other member smt sushila devi , taking handmade poster, flags , request those who have not wearing the mask and do not maintain the social distancing and distributing masks.

After few days after Beena Devi realised that signal hand could not serve maximum and do properly so she decided a form a team would mean more hands leading to an increase in the outreach and hence, included thirteen women of the SHG in her village. She started awareness and information on COVID 19 and motivates other women to give us moral support and helps us in to spread the awareness for COVID 19 and teach them how to stitch clothe masks that were to be later distributed in the village for free. The group successfully distributed 305 homemade masks in the village and their helmets.



Majority of the families in the village and helms belong to the marginalised or low-income group, making them even more vulnerable and exposed to the existing systemic inequality in the society. The government schemes for the needy in Nagal heera, had only managed to reach a few families whereas many households were still struggling to survive with not enough left to eat. Post discussing the matter with the Field coordinator of Spectra Organisation as well as the Federation leaders, the group decided to identify the needy families and distribute ration kits to them. After a brainstorming session on ways of managing money for buying the kits, the group unanimously decided to use their own savings along with some funds from donations.

The total money collected was 2750 rupees. They identified 5 families that appeared to be in dire need of basic necessities, confirming it with other villagers too along with the information on schemes they had availed so far. Three families out of the chosen households belonged to single women whose husbands had passed away and the other two belonged to a migrant daily wage labourer who had returned home due to the lockdown. It was brought to the Federation's notice that they had so far, only received wheat. It was then decided that the collected money would be used towards providing these 5 families the basic ration kits for everyday use. Each ration kit consisted of 2 kg rice, 500 grams of Dal, 1 kg of salt, a packet of tea leaves, one kg sugar, and whole spices and a packet of detergent powder.



The women admitted that initially they were scared that no other women of group would come ahead and participate in the drive. They also emphasized that the solidarity they shared as a team worked out for them and made it easier to come up with solutions.

“Be the change you wish to see in the world.” says Beena Devi, a Fedration leader.

Sharing her experience during the distribution drive Sushila Devi added, **“Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love”** When a family who were sleeping without food facing due to non-availability of ration kit then handed over the bag of ration, we could see hope in their eyes, smile on their faces and blessings on their lips. When asked about why they chose to spend their own savings in such times of financial distress, the group members added that the village had always been supportive of their endeavours, from helping with the formation of the Cluster and Fedration to encouraging their activities in villages, motivational, awareness rallies and other programmes.

“As women of this village it was our time to show our gratitude for all the support we had received”

The group members also added, the fact that it was their own initiative, proposed and led by them has given them a feeling of peace, happiness and positivity.

This welfare drive has not just been an act of charity for these upcoming leaders of tomorrow, this has also reinstated their faith in themselves and their ability to lead their communities on their own in the future, breaking the cycle of oppression, the chain of exploitation and the circle of poverty and hunger. It has indeed proven that when women come together, there is no mountain too high, no trouble too difficult to overcome.

