

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL WORK RESPONSE TO COVID-19 SITUATION AUGUST-2021

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NEED-BASED FIELD INTERVENTIONS FOR THE FAMILY ENRICHMENT AND GUIDANCE AMONG THE SCHEDULED TRIBE THAKAR COMMUNITY AT PUNOBACHIWADI

• I. INTRODUCTION

- Responding to an emergency situation like Covid-19 pandemic is advisable and expected from all those who are in the professional field, especially the Social Workers.
- It was a timely and sensitive decision to organize programs of family enrichment and guidance in an area which is isolated, remote, undeveloped, and with people who are belonging to an uneducated Scheduled Tribe Thakar community, who are disoriented and disconnected from other areas or communities.
- It was a team work of CSRD- Institute of Social Work and Research, Ahmednagar; Morning Star Charitable Trust, Vavarath; Field Coordinator Mr. Mangesh Jadhav and MSW Student Mr. Philip K. Jose.



2. CONTEXT AND THE COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

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- **Punobachiwadi is a very remote area of Rahuri Taluka of Ahmednagar district in Maharashtra. It is one of the hamlets of Vavarath village which is 77 km away from Rahuri and 50 km from Ahmednagar.**
 - **It is a Scheduled Tribe Thakar community consisted of 30 families and a population of 232 people residing over who are mainly hunters, fisher men and farmers**
 - **Punobachiwadi was a covid-free community and there were no cases reported as Covid positive. During the first wave of the pandemic, some people were symptomatic but never hospitalized or seriously affected. Only 10 percentage of the population were vaccinated and the others were not much interested or convinced of the need of vaccination.**
 - **The vulnerable sections in the community with regard to the Covid-19 pandemic was the children who were deprived of the online or offline classes and are completely out of school experience and exposure and the elderly people with loneliness and depression.**
 - **The youth were disoriented and addicted for drugs, alcohol consumption, and substance abuse. Social evils like child marriage, child labour, dowry system, female foeticide, are prevalent in the community.**

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERVENTIONS

- To make the families in the community well equipped with proper information regarding the ways of spreading the pandemic and to avoid unnecessary panic situation. To organize support groups with practical knowledge and competency to meet any emergency situations in the community.
- To train the children and the youth in creating awareness on the need of cleanliness and hygiene in the family and the community. To educate the children of the community to have scientific knowledge and communication skills
- To help the elderly to cope with the situation of the pandemic and help them to resist the situations of loneliness and depression. To train the farmers to be more independent in their own field by smart farming techniques and capacity building workshops.
- To help the people to be medically fit by making opportunities of medical diagnosis and free medication.



4. FIELD INTERVENTIONS AND THE METHODS USED

- **4.1. Covid-19 Awareness Programs:** Covid- 19 awareness lessons on the precautionary methods and the preventive measures were given to all the families in the community, so that they could be prepared for the pandemic emergency situation which may occur at any time in the community.
- **4.2. Counselling and Capacity Building:** Identified the elders with depression and loneliness, youth with disorientation and deterioration of ethical and democratic values and guided them with counselling and capacity building. Smart Farming skills were developed among the farmers
- **4.3. Group Work and Educational Enhancement Programs:** Children were invited for Group Work to solve their problems by mutual sharing, interaction and understanding. Developmental programs like English coaching classes, awareness programs and Science classes were organized.
- **4.3. Free Medical Camp & Social Awareness Campaign:** Free medical diagnosis conducted for those in need of medical treatment and free general medicine and Covid-19 precaution kits were distributed. Social awareness was given to the community members against the prevalent social evils among them.

5. CHALLENGES AND THE DIFFICULTIES FACED

- **Incapacity of effective communications due to the lack of efficiency in the local language.**
- **The timing of the working hours in the community was inappropriate to manage because, the availability of people in the community were only few hours in the day time.**
- **The difficulty faced in the transportation facilities, climate changes and the presence of wild animals.**

6. OUTCOME OF FIELD INTERVENTIONS

- **People in the community began using mask whenever they come in contact with others in public and they learned the need of sanitizing frequently.**
- **Those who were reluctant to take vaccines, later began coming forward to take vaccines and asked for vaccination Programme in the village.**
- **A general consciousness of cleanliness and hygiene were observed everywhere in the community.**
- **The elders who were in loneliness and depression were seen happy in doing things and maintaining their health.**
- **The youth started taking initiatives and acting voluntarily to solve the problems of the community by dedicating their time and energy.**
- **The disobedient, introvert, not confident, and unsocial children became more extrovert, confident, obedient and socially responsible.**



7. OUTCOME OF FIELD INTERVENTIONS(CONTINUATION)

- The people in the community were feeling good and satisfied with the free medical camp organized and the free treatment and the medicines they received. They became more confident about their health and living conditions.
- The social awareness campaign made them to think about the social evil in the community and the need for eradicating them and changing the situations of the community and the families. A general awareness was formed among the people of the community about the social wellbeing they have to achieve and maintain.
- The people in the community were happy to acknowledge that the name and culture of their community are known to the other parts of the world through the field intervention reports, newspaper articles and social media sharing.



8. CONCLUDING REMARKS

- **The field interventions were enriching and fully equipped with social and attitudinal changes in the families and community of Punobachiwadi as a whole.**
- **This need-based interventions in the Covid-19 pandemic definitely helped the people in the community to reorganize and rejuvenate their relationships and mental dispositions.**
- **The transformations and developments in the community are both of immediate and also of long-term benefit.**



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THANK YOU

