

Rapid Assessment on Disaster and Response Report

Region: Balasore

State: Odisha

Balasore Region

In Balasore region, DHAN Foundation is working in Balasore and Mayurbhanj districts. So far, there are no positive cases of Covid-19 in the region. All the three positive cases are traced from the state capital (Khurda) district. In Balasore around 49 people who came from different countries are under surveillance. No registered case in Balasore is making the people to turn a blind eye toward social distances.

Petty shops

DHAN Foundation in Balasore region is working with 1500-2000 members whose livelihood depends on small petty shops. They are suffering directly from lockdown.

Impact on Livelihood

Most of DHAN member families in Balasore region depend on daily wages, petty shop, private companies, factories, agricultural works and some are migrant families as well. Almost all the shops are closed both macro and micro except vegetable shops, groceries and medical stores. The Most of the vendors are quoting their own prices regardless of the government decision to have the same nominal prices. The lockdown hit hard to all DHAN member families in the Balasore region:

Fisheries

Around 400 families with whom DHAN Foundation is working in Balasore region depends on fishing (both marine as well as inland). They are suffering due to lockdown.

The daily wage members are in distress. Their savings being minimal or zero they are uncertain of their future. The same is the situation with the tribal people DHAN Foundation is working in Balasore. Most of the tribals employed in labor work, living day-to-day, and their future is amiss amidst the lockdown. DHAN is working with migrant families in the region. The workers expressed their distress since they didn't receive any wages from their contractors despite they are in dire need of money. Agricultural families associated with DHAN verbalized their worries over the low or no availability of fertilizers and pesticides, and also they articulated their fears about the dubiousness of their livelihoods for the next agricultural season.

Wage Labors

DHAN Foundation in Balasore region is working with 5000 to 8000 members who work as daily labors. Due to lockdown they are suffering from credit burden.

With our members

Responding earlier and fast, most of the federations disseminated the knowledge and awareness about Covid-19 to the members before the lockdown. Member families were given clear instructions on how to reach to the staff over phone for any issues, problems, or

about their fears. Though the staff are unable to reach out to the members after the lockdown, they are in constant touch with the members and their families.

Federations addressing Covid-19

Balasore team has created flyers about corona, do's and don'ts in the local languages and shared through WhatsApp groups to the field volunteers and members. Disaster Risk Reduction staff of DHAN Foundation in Balasore, Basta and Jaleswar have taken initiatives to lock down their villages and panchayats. They also involved in the process of maintaining quarantine centers, marking social distance circles near shops, PDS ration distribution to the villagers and distribution of soaps/sanitizers to people. The regional team of Balasore has been in touch with DRR staff, field associates and leaders who are working/volunteering to fight the Covid-19 in the villages: providing data from the valid sources to them, creating awareness on the fake news that's being viral in the social media platforms. DHAN Kalanjiam members are extended their support by providing ration and grocery items to the needy people in their working areas.

Poultry

Around 200 families with whom DHAN Foundation is working in Balasore region are running poultry. They have reported loss in poultry because of unable to get feed for chickens during the initial 4 days of lock down

Voice of our members and leaders to tackle COVID:

Daily wage members belong to SC, ST communities, they are voicing for a minimum two-month relaxation on their loan repayments. Though RBI announced EMI relaxation for three months, the private sector and the retailers are not considering the options. Despite the government announcement for wage and ration at their doorstep, most of the families are voicing the reach of the wage as well as ration was minimal and slow paced in their areas.

Other vulnerable sections in Balasore:

Migrants

DHAN Foundation in Balasore region is working with 500 migrant families are in distress, as their family members are out of the state and in bad financial condition.

People from different states usually find their ways into the region seeking wage works. Amidst lockdown, all of them have been put in quarantine centers and some of them were even forced to stay in thatched and temporary housing with the ration and grocery assurance from the government. Likewise, our member families seeking wage works travel to the nearby states. Amidst lockdown, all those members are lockdown in those respective states and their families are in distress in the fear of their family members. Odisha government has set up a special call centre, appointed five IAS officers to take care of the issues related to migrant workers. But the flipside of the approach being failing to identify at Panchayat-level and facilitate for the immediate support.