

Lakhanpur Gram Panchayat initiative to Control infection

In recent past we have seen that as the response to this disastrous COVID 19 took shape and the State of Bihar moved towards lockdown. State-wide lockdown was announced restricting movement as preventive measure to control the infection among 12.7 crore populations. After this announcement a mass movement of people across the country was observed. The labour as well as service class population started to move towards their native town or villages. Various quarantine centres were built for the migrants who were heading home to stay for 14 days and ensure that they do not take the corona virus infection home. All the districts were divided into three zones that are green, red and orange based on the number of cases. As the number of cases started to rise during the period of March 2020, with return of urban settlers to rural parts in Gaya *It created a sense of fear among the villagers especially when we focus towards the Lakhanpur Gram Panchayat of Manpur block in Gaya.* Panchayat has taken various initiatives to curb down the impact of COVID 19 and enhance the level of awareness among community.

As per discussion with PRI representative the area the major challenges among the community were being unaware of COVID 19 preventive measures, tendency to refrain COVID 19 and threat of being quarantine after testing, unaware of treatment facility and services available in the area.

To bridge this gap of information and increase the level of awareness an audio messaging campaign was organised throughout the panchayat. Public meeting were arranged and information regarding preventive measures and cure were disseminated regularly.

Distribution of mask and soap were also undertaken. It was a door step approach to every house hold through panchayat volunteers.

During this period panchayat at its own level has made various arrangements and quarantine centres were developed at Budhgere and Rasalpur Schools to address population heading towards the rural panchayat areas. Sanitisation of panchayat were undertaken mostly the areas where footfall is high.



To enhance its coverage and services the community groups were also asked to extend their help by the PRI representatives. Where Jitendra Kumar and Digvijay Prasad a leader of community owned group in village lakhanpur reflects that ‘Adasrsh Vidyarthi Sangh’ with a committee of 25 people and membership of whole village claim to undertook sanitisation at house hold level under the guidance of Mukhiya and ward members. Community contributions were made to buy chlorine powder and with the help of tools used for irrigation in agricultural fields they spread it throughout the village. A community well was also chlorinated to stabilise the quality of water in nearby surrounding. The waste water in the area is collected in an abandoned pond in Lakhanpur village and this pond filled with waste water is situated just near to a community well (only used for rituals/ religious purposes). After treating this well with chlorine the nearby Household observed positive change in physical quality of water as per taste. Hence now it is in routine to treat this well on regular interval.

In case of entry of migrants during the lockdown phase committee members says people used to visit from trucks in the village. The youths in the village were promptly active to call and pass information regarding such trespassers to ward representatives. They used to track them down with the help of ASHA workers in community. It was a not a tough task to locate any such migrant in the village. The male migrants were sent to quarantine centres whereas the female were sent for home isolation.

The distribution of ration to every HH was ensured and by PRI and youth volunteers in village. It was advised not to gather in groups to collect ration. Only 40 to 50 HH were allowed to visit ration PDS centre per day. It was all properly managed and no complaints regarding the service was heard.

To extend their services under various gram panchayats Water Aid undertook various initiatives in consultation with gram panchayat representatives to raise awareness at community level. Public micking, wall painting, flex display, awareness stall on hand washing in PHC and awareness rally by FLWs were organized with covered various panchayats across Gaya district. A total of 66544 populations were covered under this initiative.



Details of population covered through public announcements

District	Block	GP	Population
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Gaya	Manpur	Gare	10241
Gaya	Nagar	Churi	10100
Gaya	Belaganj	Rauna	11068
Gaya	Banke Bazar	Goitha	10777
Gaya	Amas	Amas	9927
Gaya	Fatehpur	Nimmi	14431

To disseminate information and raise the level of awareness among community a Hygiene messaging campaign was launched during 1st April to 8th April 2021 by Water Aid India in Gaya district. Previously it was planned to be undertaken in the month of March 2021 but as per the request by government officials (CMO and DPM) we undertook it when required the most. It was the period when cases of COVID 19 infection started to rise and, in some parts, has already touched its peak.

To communicate and engage the community different method of communication were chosen. Audio and video messaging through mobile van, singing in regional language and interactive session to answer the questions raised by community. Children and female voices, local singers and use of regional language catalyzed the whole process and helped us to engage with community. We received an overwhelming response from community. All these intervention strategies were based upon the perception collated from community through village meetings. It



was focused on three key behaviors that is Hand hygiene, Use of Mask and Social distancing. The major output of these meetings were enlighting that community was aware of these concepts but still these key information were not in their daily life habit. These precautionary measures were in their behavior only if they are away from their village.

With this Eight-day long campaign a total of thirty villages among Eighteen Gram panchayats in Six blocks of Gaya districts were covered.

