

# Sustaining Hope

*The Humanitarian Response  
Edition*

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DISASTER RELIEF

**ADRA India's Quarterly Newsletter**

**April-June 2021**



**ADRA**





A woman impacted by Cyclone Yaas showing her relief material donated by ADRA



A beneficiary received COVID-19 Vaccine shot at a centre run by ADRA in Patna



Staff at Shimla Sanitarium and Hospital thanking ADRA for donating medical equipment

## COVER STORY

### ADRA Mounts COVID-19 Response, Donates Critical Medical Equipment to Hospitals



Staff at the METAS Hospital in Surat posing with the Oxygen Generation Plant



Tea garden workers in Assam standing with E-Rickshaw run by ADRA to create awareness on COVID-19

New Delhi, May 26 2020: The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) in India mounted its response to COVID-19 by supporting select hospitals across India with critical medical supplies and several oxygen generation systems to ease the country's COVID-19 health crisis.

As India struggled to re-attain normalcy after the first wave of the pandemic, a second deadlier wave gripped the country. A deadlier Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus made its way across the country, affecting millions and killing lakhs of people. The country's health care system was unprepared to deal with such a massive surge of new cases, leading to avoidable tragedies.. Towards the end of April and throughout May, hospitals and citizens were sending out SOS calls for medical-grade oxygen supplies, hospital beds and medicines.

To address the immediate needs, ADRA set-up an Oxygen Generation Plants in METAS Adventist Hospital, Surat and planned more plants in select hospitals across India. ADRA also prepared to set-up a COVID Care Centre in Assam.

Additionally, ADRA transported oxygen concentrators, ventilators, monitors, equipment such as BiPap machines and flow meters, and mobilizing essential preventive gear for frontline health care workers, including PPEs such as N95 masks, face shields, and surgical gowns.

ADRA collaborated with local health clinics to increase vaccine access and reduce COVID-19 hesitancy to prevent the spread of the deadly virus. The team on the ground coordinated with the government and doctors' organizations to provide additional medical staff, doctors, nurses, and data entry operators at COVID-19 vaccination centers in various locations in India.

During the quarter, ADRA India's response covered 11 states including Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Sikkim. ADRA India's initial response was supported by ADRA International and several other ADRA member countries.

## Message from our Country Director



**Weston Davis**

The last quarter was a unique time for all of us in India. An unprecedented second wave of COVID-19 hit the country somewhere around mid-April. The healthcare system, the government and the citizens were not prepared to deal with such a massive surge of a deadlier variant of the virus. This surge cost us thousands of lives and impacted millions. Adding to the challenges, two cyclones - Tauktae and Yaas wreaked havoc in different parts of the country.

However, it was overwhelming to see the world come together to aide India in its humanitarian fight. ADRA's global network worked round the clock to ensure substantial funds for ADRA India, both for its COVID-19 response as well as the emergency relief work. We are grateful to all the faithful and concerned donors, who have been our support system during these tough times.

#### WATCH OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE VIDEO



#### WATCH OUR TEAM'S FACEBOOK LIVE WITH ADRA INTERNATIONAL



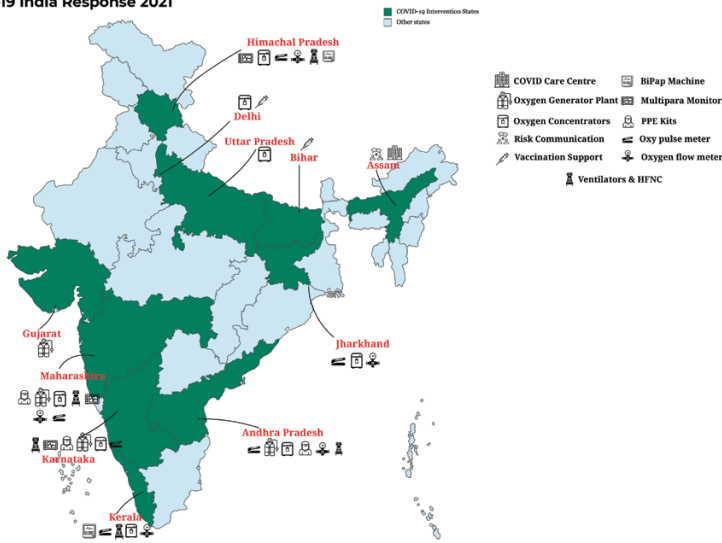
**Editor**  
Trisha Mahajan

**Assistant Editor**  
Rayyan Khan

**Contributors**  
ADRA India Team

# HIGHLIGHTS

## COVID-19 India Response 2021



## Quarter at Glance

- Unit members of ADRA's Sanitary Pad Production Unit (SPU) in Assam carried out six awareness drives in tea gardens on the use of sanitary pads, reaching out to over 550 women. The workers also set-up their stall at Government of Assam's annual fair in Guwahati.

- In Bareilly and Moradabad Districts of Uttar Pradesh, 269 appreciation awards were given to Teeka Sakhis, translating to Vaccination Friends, for their efforts to identify unvaccinated children and counsel their families to get their children immunized.

- A total of 381 parents in Bareilly and Moradabad, who had gotten their children fully vaccinated, were presented with the 'Full Immunization Certificate'.

- World Immunization Week was observed in all 15 CGPP blocks from 24 to 30 April 2021. More than 250 children were vaccinated in 70 special immunization sessions.

- Cluster approach was introduced in Uttar Pradesh state to increase COVID19 vaccination coverage. Each block has been divided into clusters. Communication strategies and plan (such as meeting with religious leaders and community influencers, mosque announcement, training of CAG members, etc.) has been developed by ADRA.

- Counselling and psycho-social support was extended to nearly 2750 quarantined and COVID-19 infected families during the quarter.

## COVID-19 SUPPORT

11 states reached

4000 no. of medical equipment and gear donated

1735 Community leaders, health workers trained on CAB

12,000 people reached through awareness drives in tea gardens of Assam

11,596 people vaccinated at centres managed by ADRA India

# NEWS & UPDATES

## Here comes Muskan Express!



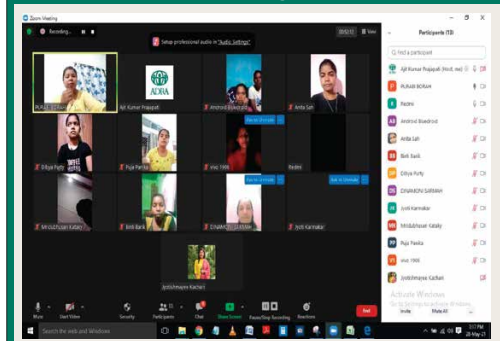
ADRA India's new initiative Muskan Express – an electronic rickshaw – went around the districts of Bareilly, Moradabad & Hardwar spreading awareness on the importance of Routine Immunization for children and on COVID-19. Decked up with eye-catching banners, the E-Rickshaw was equipped with a sound system to play audio messages and jingles. Muskan Express went on an identified route to cover high priority zones. It halted in every village on its route and involved the communities in activities like hand washing demonstration, quiz on immunization, and COVID-19. Motivation speech by key stakeholders were organized by the ADRA team to ensure maximum participation. Through the initiative, ADRA India was able to reach nearly 1.4 lakh people.

## World Environment Day



ADRA India along with its beneficiaries in Assam planted and adopted 780 trees to commemorate World Environment Day on June 05, 2021. The members of ACCHE (Adolescents' Clubs for Communication in Health Education) schools and students under the HEROS (Handwashing Education for Restoration of Overall Sanitation) Programme celebrated the day with their respective tea garden managements by planting 50 trees each, making posters to create awareness around environment and taking an oath to protect trees and prevent their cutting. The ADRA team joined the celebrations virtually and planted trees with their families as well.

## Menstrual Hygiene Week



ADRA India celebrated Menstrual Hygiene Week in May to raise awareness on the importance of good menstrual health hygiene. Menstrual Health Day is celebrated on May 28 every year. Under the Fresh Hope for Girls Project, the ADRA team held a virtual discussion with 60 adolescent girls from Tea Gardens of Tinsukia & Dibrugarh districts in Assam. Menstruation is still a taboo in many parts, especially rural India. This causes sexual health issues among several girls. ADRA is working to break the stigma around periods by educating girls & women. In the sessions, participants were told about the role of a gynaecologist, with whom they discussed their problems and concerns on menstrual health.



## EDITORIAL

## Breaking the Stigma around COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

By Shilpi Das,  
Program Manager, Health, ADRA India

India has logged 36 million COVID-19 cases since the start of the pandemic and 403,281 deaths. The recovery rate has improved to 97.17 percent. However, a few months back the situation was quite different. The second wave of the pandemic, which started in April this year, shook the entire nation and overwhelmed India's healthcare system. In metro cities like Delhi, the daily positivity rate increased to 32.69 percent and the health system collapsed. Government imposed lockdowns in several states to curb the spread, but these efforts are an effective only to break the chain of transmission. The long term solution to ending the pandemic is by the way of immunization.

To ensure optimum coverage of the COVID-19 vaccine, it is crucial to improve vaccine acceptance, especially in a densely populated, developing country like India where social distancing and frequent lockdowns are not ideal or even possible. However, government's vaccination efforts are disrupted due to various factors, and on a community level, "Vaccine hesitancy" is a major cause for concern. Vaccine Hesitancy is not new to India and has resulted in decreased immunization coverage not only for the COVID-19 vaccination, but for multiple other vaccine preventable diseases, including measles, polio, and diphtheria. Widespread vaccine hesitancy is especially fueled by misinformation and mistrust, particularly in rural areas. Health workers face stiff resistance from people who believe vaccines cause impotency, serious adverse effects, reduction of fertility, rumors about jabs disrupting menstruation cycles and many other such rumors and misinformation.

ADRA India's field teams have been facing challenges of vaccine hesitancy since the Polio Programme, when many families closed their doors and said "No" to the Polio drive. Similar trends are seen in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme too. The solution to get rid of stigma and misinformation is to have a two-way communication strategy and by listening to the community's apprehensions, understanding the reasons of hesitancy (which may vary from place to place), and involving influencers and community people to promote the vaccination. Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) is an important tool to deal with vaccine hesitancy and involve the community to mitigate the spread of rumours. Messages delivered in a fun ways through poems, songs, street plays infotainment vans help build confidence among the community.

Through the use of aforementioned techniques in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Assam, ADRA India is working with the local authorities to increase awareness and has already been able to substantially improve immunization against the virus. Collaborative efforts between the government and civil society to improve vaccine coverage for COVID-19 are the need of the hour.

## IMPACT STORY

### A Community's Acceptance of COVID-19 Vaccination



A rumour surrounding the COVID-19 vaccination in a Community in Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh discouraged from getting immunized against the deadly virus. When ADRA was made aware of the situation, ADRA team and Baghpat Medical superintendent Dr. Vibhash Rajput tried their best to convince the community for the vaccination but to no avail. The team then decided to convince community leader/influencer to get the vaccination, which would encourage the entire community to follow suit.

Initially the influencer too was apprehensive. However, the team was persistent and held a meeting with the leader. The staff addressed the concerns and the leader was made aware of the importance of COVID-19 vaccination. The community leader was finally convinced to get vaccinated, and he even guided the team to set up a COVID-19 vaccination camp in his area, where he inaugurated the session. The inauguration of the camp was held in the presence of Dr. Vibhash Rajput. The leader also assured turnout by making announcements through mics in the district and motivated several other community leaders to get the vaccination. A total of seven vaccination camps were organized in Baghpat urban in June. As many as 1887 eligible beneficiaries received 1st & 2nd doses of the vaccination over a period of three days.

ADRA India is supporting the government in ensuring maximum coverage of the COVID-19 vaccination. Through our Core Group Polio Project and other programmes across the country, we are sensitizing communities residing in rural areas, where people are still skeptical about getting vaccinated due to several reasons including misinformation and lack of access. We have also set up vaccination centres in Delhi and Bihar in collaboration with the state governments and Doctors for

### MEET OUR TEAM

Fasih Ur Rehman, District Mobilization Officer at ADRA India, is based in Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh. Fasih has been associated with ADRA India since January 2012 and has been involved in multiple projects over the years, providing suitable experience & a keen sense of enthusiasm for the upliftment of the society. The positive organizational work culture at ADRA India has helped Fasih pursue his passion for social work with the Core Group Polio Project (CGPP).

Fasih has been working tirelessly on ADRA's relief & vaccination projects during the second COVID-19 wave. Along with the team of Block Mobilization Coordinators (BMCs), Fasih has been providing medical assistance, essential supplies, ration supplies & psycho-social support to several underprivileged & situationally hit families of their district.

As the second wave eased out, Fasih started creating awareness about the benefit of the COVID-19 vaccination among communities of Baghpat. After initial conversations, the ADRA team realised that there was a lot of stigma & rumours about the vaccination amongst the people of the district. To counter that, Fasih and his team came up with innovative and situational solutions to address the myths. Fasih has helped set up 7 vaccination drives in Baghpat district during the quarter. Fasih is now sensitizing communities about the possible third wave of the pandemic.

## FEATURE STORY

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO SRI LANKAN REFUGEES

ADRA India assisted the Tamil Nadu state government in providing cash transfers as COVID-19 Relief Assistance to the Sri Lankan non-camp refugees. Ever since the refugees arrived in India, this is the first time they have received direct cash assistance as disaster relief from the state government, which goes on to show that the non-camp refugees are finally being recognized as a part of the country's population. ADRA has played a major role in advocating for the rights and identity of the refugees in the past few years with the state government and other relevant authorities, along with UNHCR. Presently, ADRA is the only organization that is working with the Sri Lankan non-camp refugees in India. Unlike camp refugees, non-camp refugees live outside refugee shelters without access to the basic amenities and support available to refugees living in camps. Due to the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns, many a non-camp refugees lost their jobs & sources of income. Hence, they were in desperate need of institutional support. The State Government decided to provide them with disaster relief fund. ADRA India shared a list of non-camp refugees with the authorities.

Through Local Economic and Social Strengthening (LESS) Project, ADRA works to provide education and livelihood opportunities, access to credible documentation and guidance & support on voluntary repatriation to Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu. In this quarter, despite the lockdown, ADRA continued to offer service assistance along with facilitating durable solutions for the Sri Lankan Camp and Non-Camp refugees. In addition, it continued to operate its toll-free helpline and shared credible information for refugees in need.



Children at a refugee camp posing for photo



Livelihood opportunities given to refugees by ADRA



A Mobile Drop-In Centre for refugees Operated by ADRA

## DISASTER RELIEF



**Cyclone Yaas**, a powerful cyclonic storm, hit India on May 26, leaving behind a trail of damaged homes, and flooded farmland in coastal districts of Odisha and West Bengal. In Bengal, 10 million people were affected and thousands displaced, which whiplashed the country's eastern coasts.

ADRA India was one of the first organizations to respond to the immediate needs of people affected by the cyclone in South 24 Parganas, West Bengal. ADRA reached out to nearly 2000 vulnerable families with 400 shelter and hygiene kits. A total of 8,631 people were supported with the relief material. The teams on ground maintained all COVID-19 protocols during the distribution drives to ensure safety of the beneficiaries.





# ADRA

45, Kusum Marg, Block H, DLF Phase I, Sector 26  
Gurugram, Haryana - 122002