

## **Together we ensured #NoTurningBack for Our**

### **Chauffeurs**

This year has started with new hopes and aspirations for many; however COVID-19 pandemic has changed the lives of people manifold at an unprecedented scale and speed, leading to a serious humanitarian crisis across the globe. The pandemic has impacted people of all strata, however, with 80% workforce in India employed in the informal sector and one of every 3 people working as a casual daily wage laborer, this class has been at the receiving end of the crisis which accompanied pandemic. With the lockdown in place, the people belonging to this stratum have been hit the hardest as they lost their jobs, with no alternative source of income, with extreme food insecurity, health hazards and an uncertain future, making them even more vulnerable.

Since the first lockdown was announced our Sakha Chauffeurs were not driving and therefore were not earning. It became more and more difficult for our chauffeurs to deal with the damages that the pandemic had caused. The socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on our Sakha Drivers has been especially devastating, with the food insecurity and the looming uncertainty of future livelihoods.

**The global recession triggered by this pandemic sent tremors in the in the Indian employment market as well. Statistics sourced from diverse**

**sources such as Stranded Workers Action Network (SWAN), Periodic Labour Force Survey 2018-19, Centre of Monitoring Indian Economy, International Labour Organization, IMF etc corroborate this situation.**, India has 400 million informal workers left stranded without income (which makes 90% of India's workforce), 94% daily wage workers do not have labour card, 14% don't have ration cards, 17 % have no bank account, the lockdown on the earnings of women workers, 83% of them are facing severe income drop, the IMF projected 3-4% contraction of Indian economy this resulting in 76% job losses in informal Economy and rate of employment has decreased from 40% in February to 27% in April 2020.

Our women with wheel trainees, Sakha Chauffeurs, were excited to work even harder in 2020 to fulfil their dream to have a good life for themselves and for their family members, unaware of the fact that a sudden turmoil would threaten them to take back what all they have earned so far with their sheer hard work, determination and aspiration of becoming financially independent. Azad Foundation had to temporarily halt our Women with Wheels training and Sakha chauffeurs' services, who could earn only while they drive.

*As organizations, Azad and Sakha continue to reach out to our communities, strengthening our peer group network to connect with women and families providing relief, support and information. To support Sakha Chauffeurs, we launched campaign on our social media platforms #NoTurningBack to support our chauffeurs and their families.*

#### **CAMPAIGN ON SOCIAL MEDIA:**

**#NoTurningBack:** Azad and Sakha together values the trainees and chauffeurs, who lost their jobs ever since the pandemic has started. The lockdown amidst COVID-19, made it even more difficult for them to manage their day to day needs and affected their lives adversely. Sakha



Chauffeurs have provided more than 1.5 million safe rides to women, worked hard and tirelessly for their children and families across three cities of Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata and Indore. #NoTurningBack Campaign was launched to ensure that they experience minimal disruption and are not deprived of ration and food supplies.

*Despite of their own problems, our chauffeurs reached out to the communities through the Sakha Cabs in distribution of ration*



**Mitu Dey, Sakha Chauffeur supporting Azad team by distributing food packets in North and South Kolkata region**



**Food packaging taking place at the Azad Kolkata centres.**

When I started my training at Azad Foundation, I used to be worried for my younger child being left alone at home, so with the Azad's team's support, I would take my younger child to the training centre where the staff would look after her while I attended training. Also, my husband fell severely ill which led to financial constraints at home and I had no money to travel to the training centre. But the training staff supported me with the travel cost.

I joined Sakha where I drove a commercial cab and I'm still driving. With my earnings I was able to support my family and look after my children's needs. During the time of pandemic and the lockdown thereafter, our lives again were beginning to be impacted by the insecurity of losing the regular income to run the household, but Azad Foundation did not let me go through the shortage of food, ration and medicines.

Azad Foundation has given me so much that it was my time to give back to them through supporting the team by packaging and distributing the food for ration in the communities nearby. Through my driving skills I could distribute food packets to the doorstep of the people living nearby and I am really happy to do so.

**Mitu Dey, Sakha Chauffeur, Kolkata**

## DELHI GOVERNMENT SUPPORT TO AZAD FOUNDATION AND SAKHA CONSULTING WINGS

Azad Foundation linked Sakha Chauffeurs with government food security schemes, however they were not able to get ration despite getting their ration cards made.

Therefore, Azad Foundation wrote to Ms. Ranjana Prasad, Member, DCPCR to support in this situation. This request made its way to the Delhi Chief Minister, Mr. Arvind Kejriwal, and about 90 women received ration kits from Delhi government directly.

## TEH BASED APPROACH TO PROVIDE RELIEF TO OUR COMMUNITIES, CHAUFFEURS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

Azad Foundation and Sakha Consulting Pvt. Ltd in collaboration with Dhwani Rural Information Systems have developed a mobile application to understand and address the changing community needs through technology. The mobile based application platform MFORM is designed to work even in areas and geographical settings with poor connectivity, so it allows users to upload data stored on mobiles and sync whenever users have connectivity.

**Our target reach is 2, 00,000 households and so far we have recorded response from 17,400 households.**

And we have been able to reach out Across 3 cities 14634 families have filled up the baseline data form (as of 9th June 2020) and it revealed that out of 14634 families

- 9587 Families (65 %) are from disadvantages sections of the society such as SC, ST and OBC.
- 7396 families (50.5%) have stated immediate need of food/ration with less than a week of food rations left with them
- 5216 families (41%) have notified that they did not get any ration support from the state agencies
- Out of these 7396 families that have immediate ration needs 4696 families (32%) are from disadvantaged communities (Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Caste (OBC) )
- Out of these 4696 families 3278 families (22%) have family income up to USD110 (INR 8000/-) per month.

**Pictures of the M Form**

**So far, we have been able to reach out to 9747 households in various capacities both directly and indirectly with the support of fellow NGOs and linkages with the Government security schemes and still reaching out regularly.**

#### **ENSURING COVID SAFETY COMPLIANT CABS:**

As a responsible organization we tried our level best to ensure that our chauffeurs do not fall short of ration, food supplies, medicines and other essential requirement, which are essential to sustain their livelihood. However, with lockdown being eased down, it became necessary to protect their livelihood once again by supplying them with COVID safety equipments for driving the cabs again. The health of our chauffeurs, their families and Sakha's clients are our utmost priority, therefore we trained our Sakha chauffeurs on the various safety rules and regulations they must follow while travelling and shuttling passengers.



Detailed safety measures were demonstrated across all cities, and cabs were customized with COVID safety equipments.

#### **Recognition to filed staff:**

**Azad's Warriors were accoladed with Certificates of Appreciation and Recognition for lending their services to ease and improve the COVID situation. These Good Samaritans of the society selflessly worked towards helping people access ration, menstrual hygiene- products and other essentials.**

They also assisted the disadvantaged section with the tedious process involved in availing the relief schemes offered by the government. They also helped in sanitizing the areas and ensure swift and immediate help reached to places of medical emergency.

*It is because the limitless generosity of donors likes you that we have been able to provide help to those in need. We hope that you continue to support our cause and enable us to transform the lives of many more women and their families, by helping them to overcome the darkness of poverty and unemployment.*

**Donate Now**