

Sangat Series | Chapter 3 : Impact

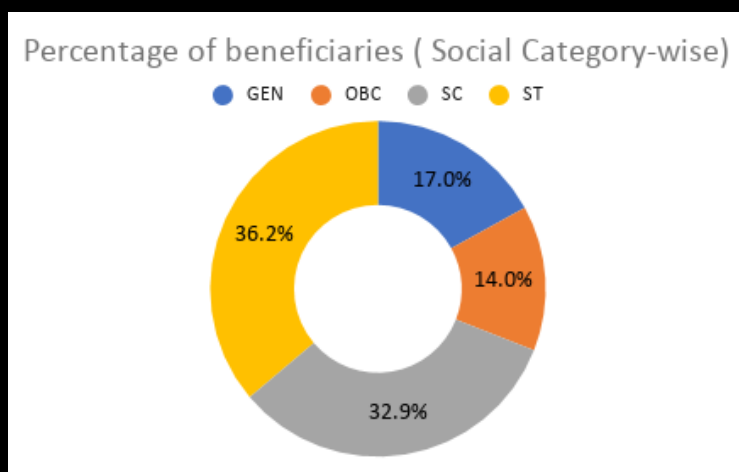
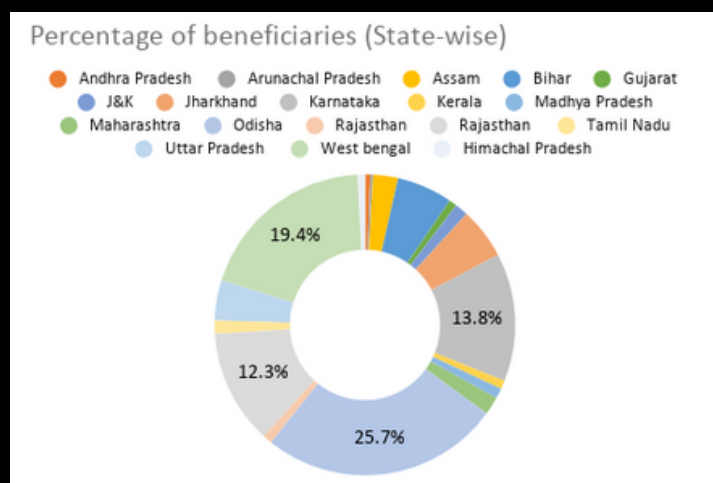
Introduction
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The previous two newsletters in the Sangat Series provided a birds-eye view of the relief work conducted, covering the backdrop of the initiative, the CBOs, communities, geographies reached, and the relief efforts undertaken by Barefoot College International's partner organisations. This time we shall begin by gaining a macro-perspective of the initiative and then delve into personal stories from the people who made the initiative what it is.

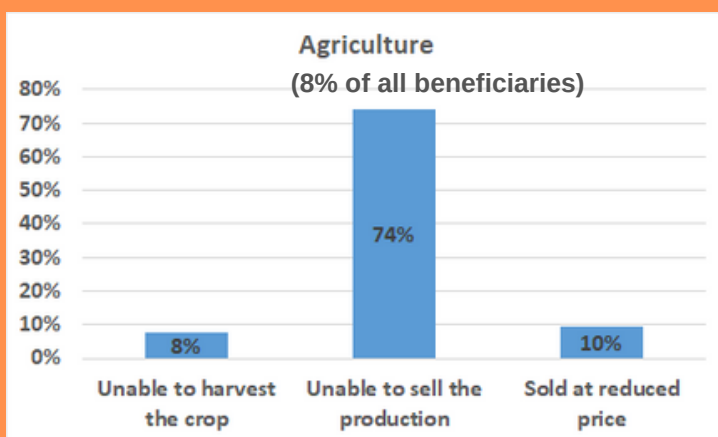
The information given below has been collated using the data captured by our partner organisations during their relief work. Given below is a representation of the profile of the beneficiaries, the impact of the lockdown on their earnings and livelihoods, and the overall reach of the CBO Relief Initiative.

BACKGROUND OF OUR BENEFICIARIES

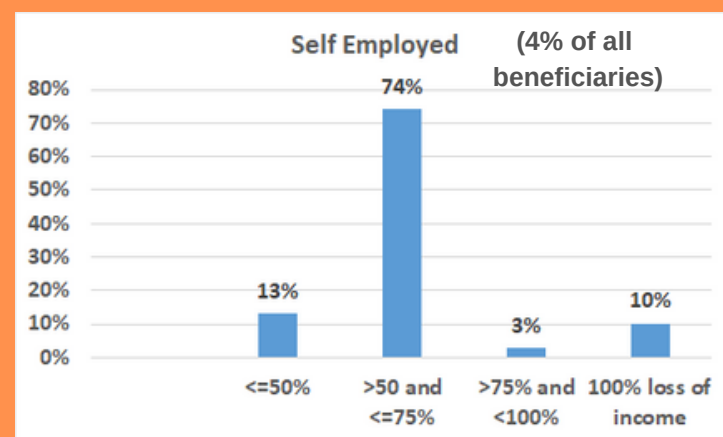
BENEFICIARY PROFILE



IMPACT OF THE LOCKDOWN ON AGRICULTURAL AND SELF-EMPLOYED BENEFICIARIES

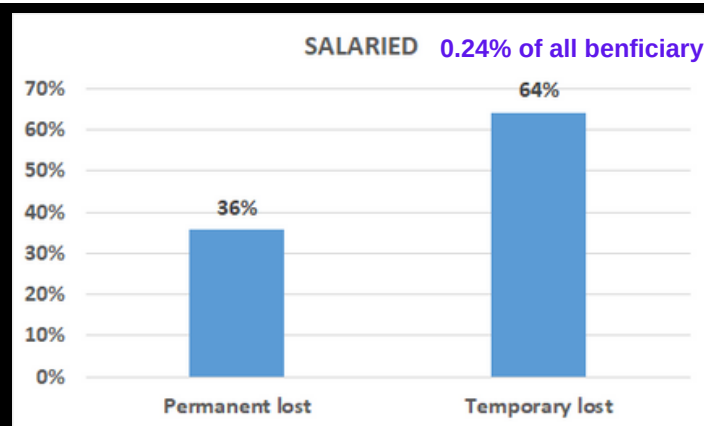
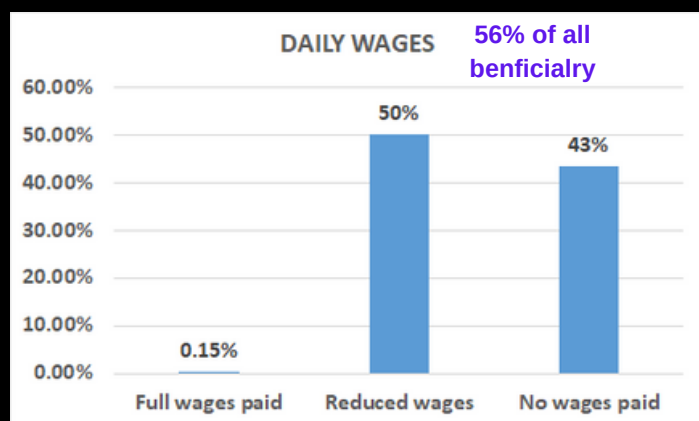


Problems faced by farmers during the lockdown period



Loss of income during the lockdown period

IMPACT OF THE LOCKDOWN ON DAILY WAGE LABOURERS AND SALARIED BENEFICIARIES



OUR OUTREACH



*Calculated by assuming 5 members in each household

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Here, we shall be looking into stories from the field be it the voices of the organisational heads, fieldworkers, representative leaders in the communities and the beneficiaries of the CBO Relief Initiative themselves.

OUR FIELDWORKERS: Heroes without a cape



Nirmal with the children in her community

Nirmal works as a coordinator in the SUTRA based in Solan District of Himachal Pradesh. SUTRA understood that the best way to safeguard the community was to support them in building immunity. Hence, they started distributing IFA tablets to pregnant women and eggs and bananas to them and the children in the community.

Nirmal shares how much she enjoys her mornings these days. As she walks from her home to work, the children in the neighbourhood run after her excitedly screaming, "Aunty Ji Namaste!" (This is a huge contrast to the initial days when she had to work hard to gather the children who stood in one place with awkward and shy smiles). Kids being kids, often ran out forgetting their masks at home but Nirmal who believes in tough love was very particular! She declared, "No masks, No eggs!" They realised that their Nirmal Aunty is pretty serious and that she won't budge; soon they learned their lesson and followed it (*well, most of the time!*).

What started as a medium to build the immunity of the children is now organically developing into a way to engage with them through the means of games and activities. Nirmal often gives the children certain tasks to complete before the next day's distribution such as noting down the name and age of each family member, coming up with names of 15 birds and animals each, drawing a train! Now the children would often remind her for the next task and even give suggestions. Nirmal cannot wait to see the amazing things that can come out of this budding relationship!

"My team members were really dedicated and self-motivated. They used to come in the morning and say 'Quick, let's go to the field'. Most days we worked from seven in the morning to nine at night. Yet, the enthusiasm did not wane off.

- Raju Sharma the secretary of DAPTA



S Surendra Pal gathering data about a farmer

"Yes, it was scary and our families were concerned. However, the communities trusted our organisation to be with them during these tough times and hence we felt responsible for them.

-Surendra Pal from Sampark (Madhya Pradesh)

It is difficult to be in the field during such times. The people in the community are scared and wary and our staff also needs to be conscious of their safety. They have to go through long spells without drinking water since they have to remove their masks for it. Since the onset of the pandemic, everyone is bringing their lunch from home; even then they don't get a place to sit and eat their lunch safely,

-Danesh Kumar , Program Manager at RASTA (Wayanad, Kerala)

SHE LEADS CHANGE: Women as front-runners in the relief effort

Banani Das Modak of Barabazar Village, West Bengal underwent training along with other women in her community on the preparation of hand sanitisers. Having seen value in what she learned, Banani started her own hand sanitiser preparation unit with the support of SPADE (partner NGO) and popularised it among local villagers who were already sensitised through the awareness cum demonstration sessions held in the village. Now she runs the business quite successfully.



Banani (above) preparing sanitisers



We did most of our work with the help of our 'didis' (a colloquial term for the women leaders appointed in the community) They led most of our work be it awareness generation through audiovisuals, and pamphlets, distribution of dry ration to vulnerable families, or provision of agri-inputs and seeds to the small farmers.

-Abhishek , SUPPORT (Jharkhand)

Women have been both the prime drivers and the receivers of the relief work ; a woman with her child posing for the photographer in Angara(Ranchi)



Left to right: A kalbeliya woman showing off her new mask; women gathered to collect ration kits from Agranee

STORIES FROM OUR COMMUNITIES

Betikhai Tumlia (80 years of age) lives in Laumal Village with her husband and her child who has a mental disability. Due to weakness stemming from old age, her husband can no longer work and hence she bears the responsibility of feeding her family by doing bamboo-crafting. However, the lockdown meant that she could no longer sell her produce at the weekly hatt nor could the traders come to her village for purchase. Just when all her saving had dried up and she had no means to survive, SARC provided food security through the distribution of food kits including leafy and green vegetables twice a week. The tears in her eyes when the team first reached out to her were a testimony to the immense sense of relief and gratitude she felt.



Dhurai Bhedi, a casual wage worker from the Musahar community in Budwa Jangal Village is the sole breadwinner in his eight-member strong household. During the lockdown, in spite of all efforts, he was only able to earn a fraction of his previous income. In addition, he didn't receive the food-grain support provided by the government due to some discrepancies in his ration card.

Dhurai says, "At a time when I am struggling to arrange even two meals every day, buying safety and sanitation products for my family isn't a priority. Hence, I am grateful to Manav Sewa Sansthan for providing masks and sanitisers and ensuring that we are keeping safe even in the shanty conditions we are living in."

Mrs. Santhi (aged 75 years) residing in Melmanambedu Village, Tamil Nadu has a daughter who is married and a son on whom she is dependent for her personal expenses. She confides that more often than not, her son causes her trouble with his habit of stealing because of which he has been jailed a few times. Knowing her situation, Sri Rajni Charitable Trust (SRCT) reached out to her and provided her dry ration. She says “When even my son and daughter did not look after me, your team has. Thank you for that”



SCENES FROM THE FIELD



Clockwise from Left: Community in Laumal waiting for the vegetable distribution to commence; A woman sitting with the ration kit provided by TSVS (Nallu, Rajasthan); Women in Baran (Rajsthan) standing in neat lines to receive masks and soaps distributed by Sankalp; A resident of Bahuarwa, Bihar giving his neighbour masks and soaps he received from Alok

SNEAK PEEK: Sangat Series | Chapter 4 : Invigoration

This brings us to the end of our third newsletter in the Sangat Series. Hope that the stories from the ground helped you connect with the initiative and brought as much pride for our partnering CBOS and its fieldworkers as we did while listening to their stories. In the last newsletter, we shall cover how the CBO relief Initiative which started as an immediate response to an emergency situation has paved the way for something greater that shall create value in the community for a long time to come.

