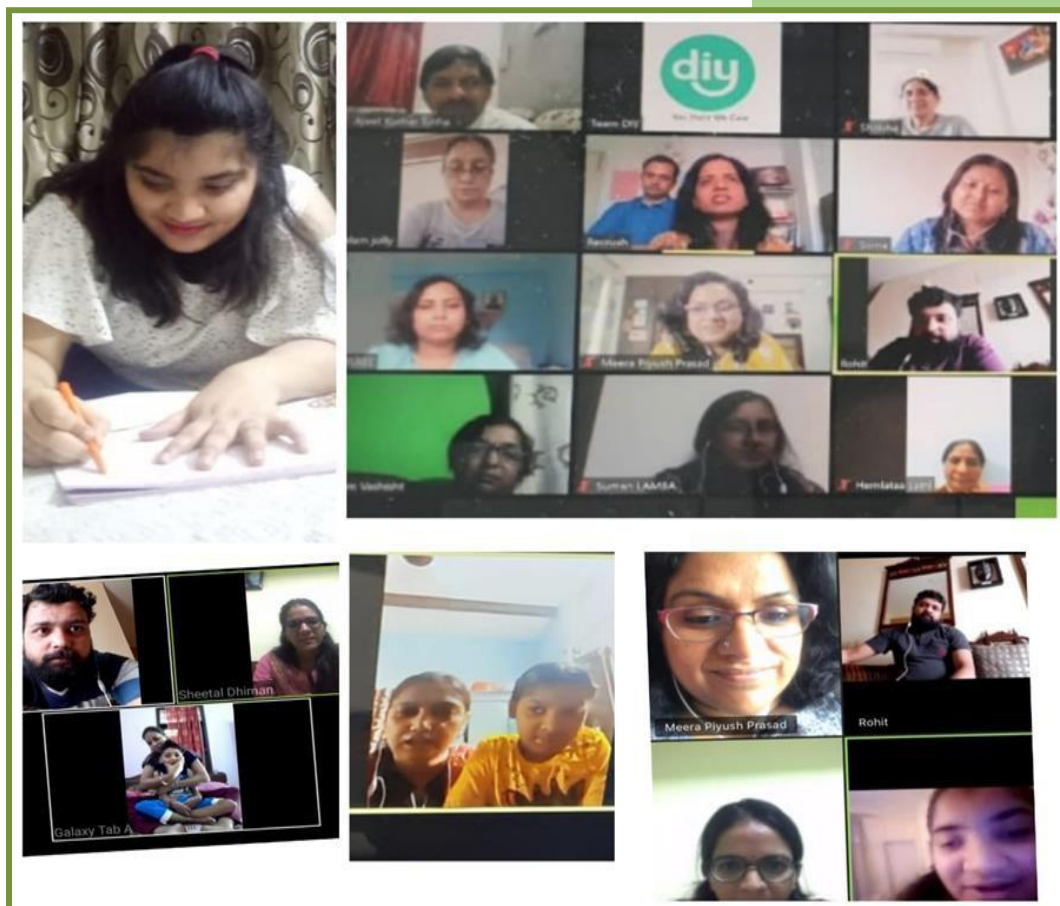


COVID 19- Steps taken by VISHWAS



June; 2020

Coping with COVID-19 and its aftermath

The COVID-19 crisis followed by the total lockdowns is an unprecedented crisis in world history. No one is left untouched by it. The humanitarian crisis has taken a toll on the life of millions across the globe and the difficulties for the vulnerable sections, especially the disabled have increased exponentially.

There is a need to work collaboratively. Technology has proved to be the biggest boon during this crisis not only to create awareness about the pandemic but also to find solutions for education, hunger, medical help and rehabilitation.

Our Approach

We have approached this crisis holistically by working as a resource organisation on the one hand and working towards guiding, supporting and rehabilitating the disabled and the disadvantaged on the other. Capacity building of the staff to cope with the new challenges has been another important action.

This will be our continuous endeavor.

The work done up to 15th June 2020 is a part of this document.

1. As a Resource Organisation:

- We are working at our own level as a resource centre and also as an active member of some groups across India working in the field of disabilities and addressing the challenges. One of these is- **COVID-19 Initiatives**. Based on the information and suggestions provided by around 20 organizations and professionals working in the field of disabilities all over the country, a document has been created. It is titled **COVID-19: Issues, Challenges, and the Suggestions for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities**. It can be used as a source of information by various states and organisations.
- Every year AIWEFA (All India Women's Education Fund Association) awards the prestigious AIWEFA- Nina Sibal Award to an organization doing exemplary work for Persons with disabilities (PwDs). VISHWAS was its 17th recipient in 2019-20. We were invited to be on the **panel of AIWEFA's COVID-19 webinar series on "Sustainable solutions for PWDs"** along with voices from other organisations.
- **Disability Resource Helpline:** The aim of the toll-free helpline **1800180 4646** at VISHWAS is to help and promote disability inclusive education in Haryana state. During the current crisis, we have contacted NGOs of 14 districts to check the concerns, not limited to education alone, of PWDs and initiatives taken to address them.

- **COVID-19 and Disability- a UN response: Persons with disabilities cannot be left behind.** VISHWAS participated in this webinar co-hosted by UN and WHO. It dealt with the kind of response that will be required from UN and reflection on the work done so far. This virtual meeting brought together disability focal points from UN entities, UN staff in different regions, countries and representatives of organisations of persons with disabilities.

2. At Beneficiaries' Level

We have worked towards addressing information, financial, psycho-social, safety and emotional needs within our limited resources. We are having regular follow up of their well-being, challenges faced by them. We also try providing guidance and solutions to address these issues.

- **Collecting and disseminating information:** They have been kept informed about nearest Shelter/food homes and zonal medical facilities. By staying in touch with anganwadis (ICDS) and ASHA workers, our community team has been able to share timely information about distribution of ration and other benefits to PWDs and their families. A lot of emphasis has been placed on sensitization and awareness about dos and don'ts related to pandemic.

Our teachers and other programme staff are in touch with the families and students and support them on day to day basis:

Data at a glance- VISHWAS Vidyalaya

Context	Number of students	Figure in %
Total strength of Vidyalaya (Nursery- VIII)	272	
Students contactable	222	81
Non contactable students	50	19
Students in Gurugram	207	93
Student families gone to hometown	15	7
Students are in good health	219	99
Students who are unwell	3	1
Students who have received financial aid	40	18
Financial aid in pipeline	78	35

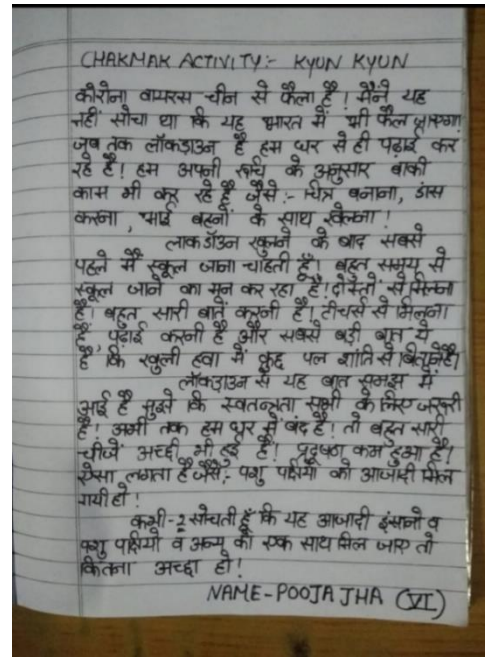
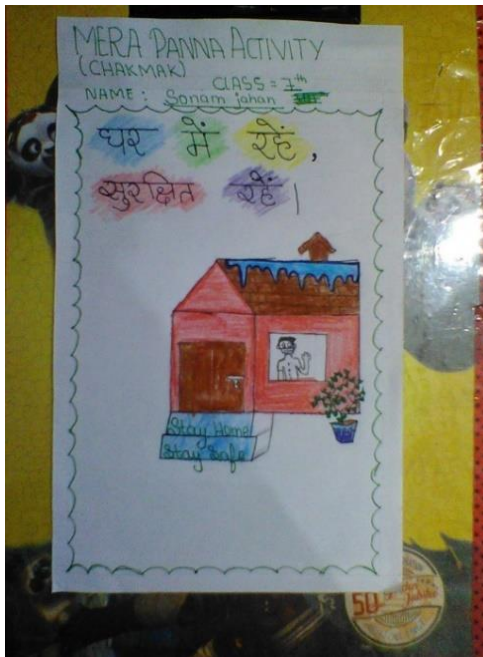
- **E-Consultations:** Our team of experts is providing guidance and support to parents of children with disabilities on a regular basis. Those in need of intensive therapy or specific medical guidance are being assisted through video conferencing/ tele-rehabilitation along with follow up which has provided them with much needed respite.

This Tele-rehabilitation service is just not restricted to beneficiaries registered with VISHWAS but also to other children and families in need of guidance related to disability during this crisis.



- **Academics:** Our students cannot afford the luxury of zoom sessions and many of the families do not even own smart phones. With a little extra effort, our team has been able to convince neighbours/ relatives of such families to play “angel”. They are being provided study material, explanatory videos, activity sheets and need-based help. Individual education plan (IEP) is being adhered to by adopting video-based learning coupled with worksheets for children with learning challenges.





Many students and their parents wanted text books to be available in the school. Some students who missed out the e-Sessions due to lack of smart phones are also amongst this group. With the lockdown lifted, a text book distribution drive was carried out.

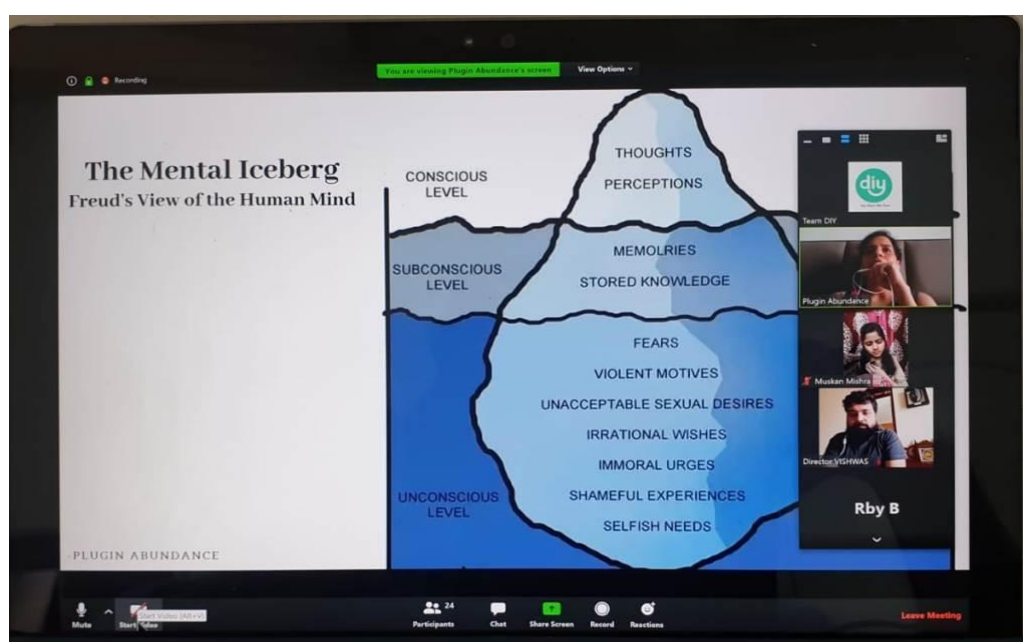
- Trainees of Skill Development Programme:** Parents have been guided to involve these children in domestic chores so that they utilize their time productively. Activities like dusting, sweeping and mopping, cleaning vessels, cooking/ related activities, ironing and many more, is helping them gain confidence in activities of daily living (ADL) along with self-esteem.

3. Capacity Building Programmes

All of us are dealing with a feeling of isolation, uncertainty and sea of other emotions. To overcome all this and more, there is one good thing that has happened. We are all accessing extensive material that is available on digital platforms and so much more is being created. Technology has been a big help and our staff under all programmes is also making use of it like the rest of the world. Regular trainings are being conducted, to equip the staff with the right kind of tools to come out as stronger individuals and also to improve their skills.

- The teaching and other programme staff has successfully completed a 4-week online learning programme of University of Cape Town, "Teaching deaf students- Become an empowered teacher".

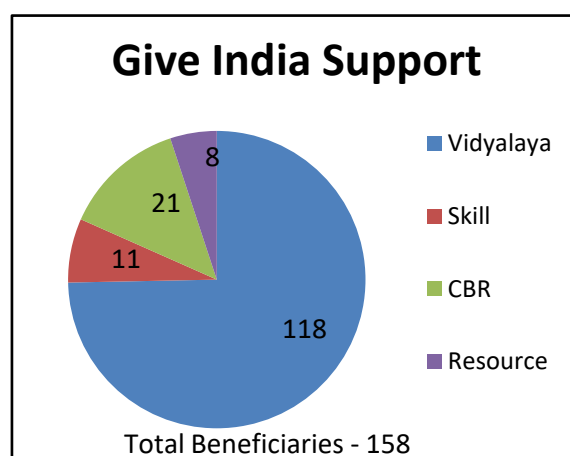
- VISHWAS in collaboration with a group of renowned professionals named DIY- Do It Yourself is organising training sessions/webinars for the staff on different topics like Behavior management in Autism and in other developmental disabilities, Teachers as Mentors, Leadership skills, Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Emergency medical response in school setting, Stress and anger management and many more.



4. Financial Aid:

The lockdown has left millions jobless. The worst affected are daily-wage and migrant labourers. Majority of our beneficiaries belong to this stratum of the society. With support from Give India Foundation, 40 such families were given financial aid of Rs.7000 each. Benefit for 118 more such families is in the pipeline.

Give India COVID-19 Support		
	GI Support	Total beneficiaries
Vidyalaya	118	297
Skill	11	21
CBR	21	47
Resource	8	112
TOTAL	158	477

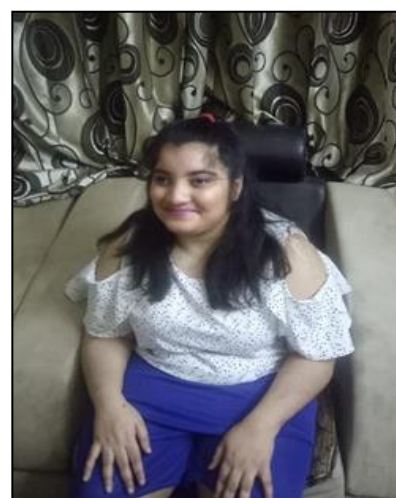


5.Humane Approach:

Despite financial constraints, we have not resorted to pay cuts or lay-offs. This gives a sense of security to our staff in general and especially tailors (PWDS) working in our production unit and other assisting staff as well. These measures are helping to bridge the physical distance with emotional connect. Hopelessness and uncertainty have been replaced by a sense of belongingness and some amount of certainty.

Case Studies

1. Barbie Chopra, a joyful 22 years old girl came to our resource centre almost 2 years back. But she left after sometime and returned only a few months before the lockdown. However, this time she seemed somewhat stressed. Her father told us she was on anti-depressants. He said that the 'inaccessible' infrastructure at various places restricts her mobility as a wheelchair user and is adding to mental health issues. She was provided counselling sessions in addition to the walking trail exercise. She was so happy that when the session got over, she did not want to go home. Slowly and steadily, she is opening up. Thus, growing confidence is helping her improve. Parents are happy that she is more lively, better focused on academics and her medication has been reduced now. E-consultations by our experts during the lockdown are keeping her in good spirit. She is following all the instructions.



<https://youtu.be/liqUjh1Q7N8>

2. Priyanshu was a regular student of class VII (without any disability) at VISHWAS Vidyalaya. Unfortunately, in 2017-18, he had fever leading to many complications and manifestation of Concurrent Encephalitis (a viral brain infection) Due to this he was comatose for 6 months. As a result of good medical care, he is a little better and relatively stable now. But as a secondary complication of the condition he is experiencing quadriparesis (weakening and tightening of all four limbs). He still isn't physically independent. Throughout the period of hospitalisation and recovery phase our team supported the family. In addition to the emotional support and professional guidance, our community team (CBR) regularly paid visits to his home for therapy and counselling. He is being supported and guided with tele rehabilitation sessions by our resource team and appears motivated for a faster recovery.



<https://youtu.be/IEAMQX6A24E>
