

COVID SITUATION GROUND REPORT - Second Wave, April 2021 Updates.

Location: 48 Slum Communities of West Delhi (Dwarka, Uttam Nagar, Vikas Nagar)

Adults & Children (Adolescent girls) Interviewed from **April 2021** : 265

The situation of slum dwellers is extremely vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the “privileged” urban population can afford to ensure physical distancing, hygiene, access to essentials and non-essentials, work from home, and get covered under social safety measures, the urban poor are struggling to survive and make ends meet. But though they are the victims, they are often blamed for spreading the disease, and become targets of stigma, isolation and discrimination even from their employers. Protsahan has been in continuous conversation with the girls, their parents and the community members to understand the impact of second wave of the Covid-19 on their lives, livelihoods and children. Following is a quick pulse check documentation of ground updates.



Protsahan Social Worker interacting with the community members in Dwarka slums

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We are scared of covid-19 testing. We don't need testing or vaccination. Vaccination causes deaths, we have heard. Who will take guarantee if someone dies due to vaccine? We want a guarantee from the govt. in writing that no-one will die of the vaccine.” Saraswati, 38-year-old woman daily wage laborer, mother of a 11-year-old Protsahan girl champion in Uttam Nagar area.

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I have taken both doses of vaccination, my madam ji where I work, also requested me to get it done. But my husband has been scared of vaccination, especially after he saw me develop a slight fever and body ache post it. I have told him this means that vaccine is working, but he is not ready to listen.” Gauri Devi, 42, works as domestic help in a residential neighbourhood of Vikaspuri. She is the mother of a 16-year-old Protsahan girl Anju, a champion who is to give her 12th standard board exam this year. Gauri's mother was a daily wage worker. Of Gauri's 4 daughters, 3 are getting quality learning & life skills support from Protsahan NGO's child protection center in Uttam Nagar. All of them live in a house, in a tiny, sunless lane near the Vikas Nagar Commando Chowk. That's 13 members from four generations, from a 1-year-old to a 80-year-old.



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The ash of the smoke hangs in a grey cloud over my home and the acrid smell from more than 200 cremations a day doesn't leave, permeating as it were their very pores.” For the residents of Shaheed Bhagat Singh Camp, living next to a crematorium is as much a struggle as keeping COVID-19 at bay, reports Indian Express.

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In absence of official data [in public domain], we only hear the noise of people that the media amplifies, which is the middle and upper middle class. Who from the slum or a rural space has the access to a twitter account or network to seek support for Oxygen or an ICU bed? Even the ones with big clouts are failing to get basic medical equipment such as oxygen or medicines, leave alone the ones from the bottom of the margins finding easy access to these.” Jaswinder Singh, Executive Director, Protsahan India Foundation

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The RT-PCR tests cost between ₹500-800, a stiff amount for a member of the daily wage class (that's money worth 2 days of their back-breaking work in extreme Delhi heat),” Preeti Kumari, Child Protection Officer, Protsahan India Foundation

Other key insights:

- Most of the community members who worked as rickshaw pullers, house helps, construction workers might not have lost their jobs in the second of covid-19, but have **largely reduced earnings as their livelihoods have suffered.**
- Some of the **migrant labourers and daily wage labourers have started migrating back to villages** with no means of survival in the city. Girls' education routine and mental health support services provided by Protsahan have largely suffered because of this.
- Many of those who have stayed back **have started selling vegetables** as that's the only occupation left right now with the weekly-extended lockdown situation in Delhi.
- **Young girls have taken the burden of the house and are sewing toy clothes for which they are earning INR 100-150 a day. Some girl children have joined their parents in selling vegetables (child labour).**



- There are **5 incest cases** that are being followed up by the team for constantly providing protection and safety to affected children. Their father and mother have lost an income during the pandemic since last year. **"My mother is scared to leave papa, because she is financially dependent on him. She doesn't know she is doing wrong by taking papa's side."**
- **"Iski mummy corona se khatam ho gyi madam. Iski jaldi shaadi kara denge, apne ghar chali jaye bas ab."** (Her mother died due to covid ma'am. Now we'll get her married soon so that she can be with her husband, and not our responsibility.), a relative says for **child marriage** of a 14-year-old girl, who lost her mother to second wave of covid-19 in April 2021.
- Most locals are seen roaming around without a mask and expressing blatant denial towards Corona, **"Yeh ameeron ki bimaari hai, humein kuch nahi hoga."**
- **Almost every household in the west Delhi slums has someone suffering from cold, cough or fever.**
- A greater proportion of the residents **share rented room with at least five to seven people for** sleeping thus no space for isolating the corona patients or maintaining social distancing at all.
- Most of the people **don't want to get tested either because they think it's regular sickness and not Covid or they fear that if they are tested positive then they might not be able to work and thus not able to feed their families.**
- **There is a resistance towards the vaccine as they fear that government is supplying wrong vaccines or fake vaccines ("it is just saline water," one said) and believe that they might actually get Covid if they get themselves vaccinated.**
- Some of them fear losing a day's pay to get the jab, or possible side effects that could force them to skip work for longer.
- Some are of the belief that pregnant women or breastfeeding women should not get vaccination as they might die. One of the old women from the community stated that a pregnant woman died in their neighborhood after getting the first dose of the vaccine. She says, **"We are scared of the vaccine. We do not want to die because of it."**
- **Some say that if they get vaccinated then they have to rest for a few days, but they don't have time to rest.**
- With the communities sharing public toilets, one resident states, **"You can't protect yourself against the virus"**



when you share the same toilet with 50 families, even if you get vaccinated, so no point in getting it anyway."

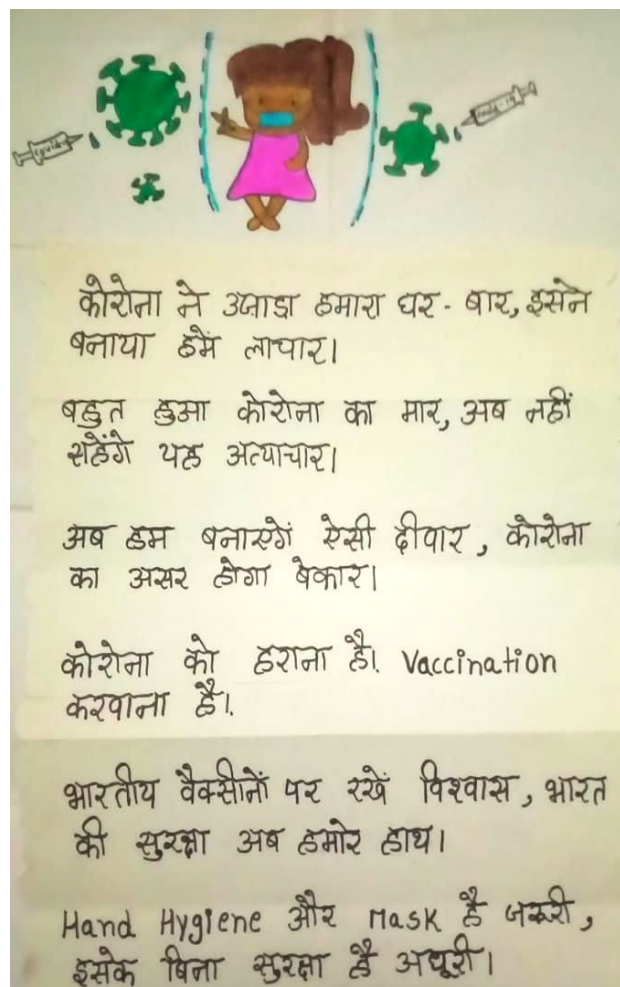
- "I have no idea about where and how to get the vaccine in any case", says a local tea seller. "They will ask for my Aadhar card, I don't have any."
- There is a "COVID fatigue" among the residents and an urgency to get back to work after lockdown curbs decimated their earnings last year.
- "Periods mein vaccination nahi lagwaani chahiye, kyunki phir maa nahi ban payeinge. Maine whatsapp pe video dekhi hai," says a young 15-year-old girl from Dwarka slums.

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STORIES OF ART ACTIVISM BY YOUNG GIRL CHAMPIONS FROM DELHI SLUMS

A few of Protsahan girl champions' artwork ideas as a part of their upcoming Instagram & Community campaign using Art to break myths and taboos and spread awareness & encourage appropriate uptake of the covid-19 vaccines by mobilising last mile urban slum communities in their entire slum neighborhoods:

To support and encourage appropriate uptake of the covid-19 vaccines by mobilising last mile urban slum communities and helping families of migrant workers and daily wage workers directly get vaccinated if they face difficulty due to lack of social security documentation. **Protsahan is critically pivoting to address the vaccine 'hesitancy' that has arisen because of unfounded apprehensions around vaccine safety, efficacy; and many other myths and misconceptions.** (A few misconceptions we have gathered from the ground by speaking to about 265+ marginalized community members include: COVID vaccine causes infertility, COVID vaccine shouldn't be taken by women when their menstrual cycles are on, accelerated vaccine development has not ensured it being manufactured with all safety protocols, fear of short-term and long-term side-effects, etc.) The strategy seeks to build **trust and enable greater confidence in the COVID-19 vaccine amongst all people by employing transparency in communication, while also managing any misinformation and rumours around it.** The communication strategy will exactly be in line with the [MOHFW.gov.in](https://www.mohfw.gov.in) guidelines that support the COVID-19 vaccines rollout in India to disseminate timely, accurate and transparent information about the vaccine(s) to



extremely disadvantaged groups of people with marginalised identities and intersectionalities to alleviate apprehensions about the vaccine, ensure its acceptance and encourage uptake. Protsahan can do this well because we have built trust with our over a decade long presence in urban slum clusters due to deep immersive work with them all these years. **Our 4 child protection centers servicing 48 urban slum community clusters will be ready to transform into covid vaccination awareness support (CVAS) hubs by May 20th, 2021 to reach between 6-8 lakh individuals in these communities.** We have partnered with Noora Health and some independent digital influencer artists for IEC content to start off our work in communities without any delays, a few samples attached here with. More being built with several independent artists in 4 different languages as this proposal is being drafted.

Other critical support being given by Protsahan in the ongoing crisis:

1. **Addressing Grief & PTSD arising in marginalised children at the bottom of the pyramid in need of care and protection** through long term care & support services focussing on Education, Healthcare & Justice: <https://www.ketto.org/fundraiser/protshanforindia>
2. Immediate intervention in **child abuse and gender based violence cases** to stop abuse and rehabilitate the child (with a focus on stopping child sexual abuse and child marriages which have escalated during the lockdown as children in slums are stuck at home with negligible means of survival and protection).
3. **Content and Phone Training Support:** Long term school shutdowns and closures will only further have impacted children's education drastically especially the ones who are not connected with **digital devices 24*7**. Continuing our support from last year's efforts by continuously providing education through video classrooms on WhatsApp.
4. Connecting people with verified leads for Oxygen Cylinders, Oxygen Concentrators, critical medicines, free food home delivery for covid patients and Hospital Beds in India with a focus on Delhi-NCR in partnership with grassroots volunteers. We're also in conversation with credible partners and vendors to build stronger and more robust logistics support for about 60 oxygen cylinders and concentrators for most needy and dire cases who cannot afford to pay for them. We are trying our best to ensure even in these times, health and dignity is not just a currency for the privileged but across all strata.



5. Flattening misinformation curve and vaccination hesitancy through key tie ups and partnerships to create & disseminate IEC material on promoting vaccination awareness in our slum communities

सुरक्षित कल टीके के बल

खुशियों भरे दिन आने वाले हैं!

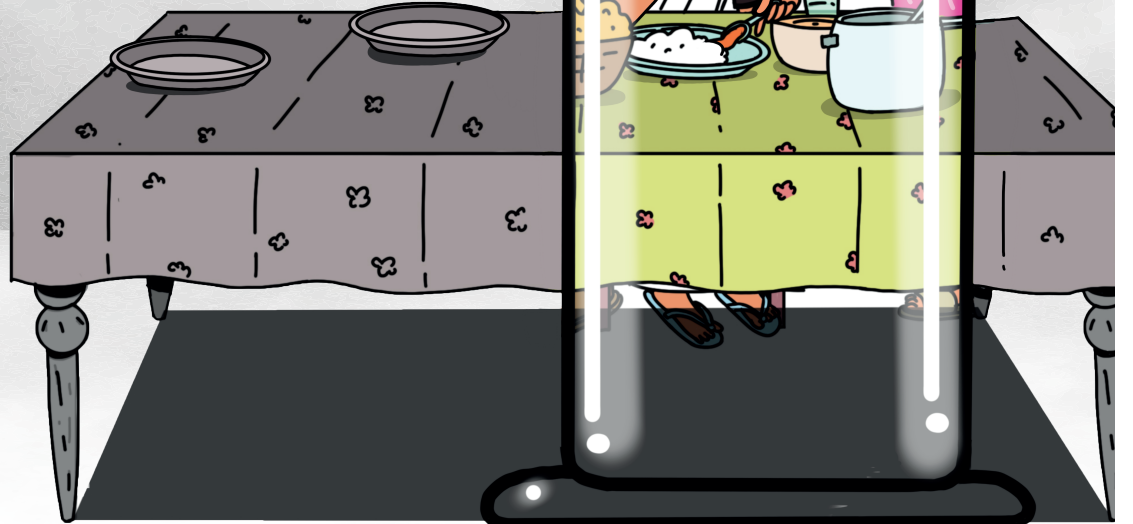
कोविड के टीके अब उपलब्ध हैं!

चलो हम वैक्सीन लगवाएँ और स्वयं को

और एक दुसरे को सुरक्षित रखें।

चलो सब मिल वैक्सीन लगवायें और

अपने देश को सुरक्षित बनायें!



कोविड-19 और वैक्सीन के बारे में अधिक जानकारी के लिए, अपने **व्हाट्सएप कैमरा** का उपयोग कर के QR कोड को स्कैन करें!