

Monthly Newsletter – April 2020

❖ WASH AND COVID-19

Responding to Covid-19 Pandemic through WASH Practices

The world is facing a global health crisis due to COVID-19 pandemic. As part of 'Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity' Water For People India amidst the nationwide lockdown situation in India has been regularly taking meaningful and collective efforts for immediate response in the program areas to suppress transmission of the virus to end the pandemic; and to tackle the various social and economic dimensions of the crisis.

In Sheohar district, Bihar the frontline workers including field facilitators and community mobilizers are working towards awareness generation in communities to disseminate safe WASH practices and to maintain social distance at community water points and while purchasing ration from public distribution shops. The field facilitators are also emphasizing the right method of handwashing - for at least 20 seconds – at five critical times among the villagers whilst practicing social distancing. Farmer Clubs are also generating awareness among their peers on regular handwashing and maintaining social distance while harvesting in fields. For wider dissemination on importance of handwashing, Project Sheohar team has created a short 1-minute video and shared it among their partners, Civil Society Organisations, and local staff.



With support of NSE Foundation and in collaboration with local administration, Water For People India team in Rajnagar block, Birbhum district, West Bengal has resorted to art and colour to generate awareness about COVID-19. Ten locations within the block have been identified wherein local artists have created street art depicting COVID-19 as a 'demon' indicating the damaging effect of the virus with messaging on "Symptoms of Corona", "Dos and Don'ts", "Stay Home, Stay Safe" and "Break the Chain." Situation is being monitored in Khoyrasol and Rajnagar blocks by the Gram Panchayat, Village Water and Sanitation Committee and Water User Committees to ensure social distancing at community water points and to ensure that each person has a mask or a piece of cloth to cover their nose and mouth while stepping out.



As part of community response, Water For People India has been advocating people in BB Hall, Sickline, and Sonai slums in Kolkata on hygiene and importance of handwashing. Since 2017, under the ITC Limited flagship project *Mission Sunehra Kal*, Water For People India has been intervening in these areas and had renovated 29 community toilets with urinals and handwashing facilities, which has helped about 1000 households to lead a life of dignity amidst the pandemic.



❖ OBSERVANCES

Earth Day celebrates 50th Anniversary



Earth Day is an annual event celebrated around the world on April 22 to demonstrate support for environmental protection. Earth Day 2020 marked 50 years of action for our home planet. Climate change represents the biggest challenge to the future of humanity and the life-support systems that make our world habitable. The theme of Earth Day 2020 '*Climate Action*' stressed the need for stepping up efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen actions that can be taken to protect biodiversity, to contribute reforestation efforts of degraded landscapes and to commit to the overall sustainable management of natural resources.

Water For People India observed Earth Day by going digital and connected with the communities and local stakeholders through video calls and sharing text and pictorial messages on environmental protection. As part of celebrations, Self-Help Group members in Pochilima village in Ganjam district, Odisha planted saplings while tree plantations were done by the community in Howrah district, West Bengal.

