

## **Crushing the COVID-19 Wave!**

### **BDSSS in solidarity with Humankind**



The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the interrelated nature of our world – and that no one is safe until everyone is safe. Only by acting in camaraderie can communities save lives and overcome the devastating socio-economic impact of the virus.

There were 2.95 crore total confirmed cases in India with 3.74 Lakh deaths in the country as on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2021. Low-income individuals were more contracted with the virus and lost their lives from it. Almost everyone was affected by the second wave in one way or the other. Some were infected, some lost (or feared losing) a family or a community member, a friend, a neighbour, a colleague. Most were being in isolation, unable to express anxiety, unable to go out and do something. Unceasing death, overflowing crematoriums, unending pyres burning thousands of bodies; hospitals with no beds or oximeters and with inadequate oxygen, medicines, vaccines, testing tools and PPE, medical staff at the breaking point, etc deteriorated the situation.



BDSSS envisaged helping the community it cordially works with, especially the high-risk individuals and red flagged areas. The organisational work areas – the five districts and one taluka – Dharwad, Gadag, Haveri, Bagalkot, Belgaum, Chandgad of the Diocese of Belgaum, saw an abrupt rise in the spread, and one of the many reasons touted by experts was lack of adequate medical care facilities and people falling for myths related to the virus. To break this bug and to ensure that people, especially the children and senior citizens are safe and sound, BDSSS embarked on a robust relief work in the second wave where it raised Rs.13,63,575 as COVID-19 Relief funds and spent the same as on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021 and BDSSS will continue assisting all who are affected by COVID-19.

The strategy deployed was multipronged. In association with its partner Caritas India, BDSSS reached out to more than 75 poor families in 15 under-served villages with medical kits. Each kit contained:

- Pulse oximeter
- Vaporizer (Inhaler)
- 15 N-95 Face Masks
- 1 liter Sanitizer

The Director and the Assistant Director were proactive and reached out to the priests of the Diocese through social media like email and WhatsApp, seeking for any help they might want to reach out to the people in need. In a letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021, the BDSSS Director sought any support, mainly medical assistance and food kits that the community needed and stressed that **‘we don’t need photographs of beneficiaries’**, except when requested by the donors. The idea

was to reach out to the affected without discrimination of religion, class and caste. As resources were scarce, BDSSS merged support from within the organization and external donors. It must also be noted that the recent FCRA amendments delayed the process of external support substantially, making it difficult for many civil society organizations including BDSSS.



However, BDSSS raised a decent resource of Rs.10 Lakh from Caritas India to procure essential medical equipment for a dedicated COVID-19 Care Unit at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Dharwad. Amidst all these, the team also reached to children across the Dharwad district with psychosocial support. BDSSS is working with its collaborator Childline India Foundation in rehabilitating the children orphaned by COVID-19. The entire team of BDSSS prays that God Almighty helps the organization's zeal to raise more resources for the relief of the COVID-19 affected and reach out to more people. It also conveys its gratefulness to its donors – the Augustinian Sisters, Caritas India, Jeannette D'Souza's Fundraiser for India and other local donors who wished to be unnamed for their love and care in these unprecedented times. We wish them well and pray for their safety.

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