



Sewa News

www.sewausea.org

May 2021

Executive's Corner

Dear Sewa Friends and Supporters:

I write this with both a sense of urgency as well as some satisfaction: urgency because the situation in India continues to be serious. We therefore must move urgently to reduce as much of the pressure that Indian doctors, hospitals, health care agencies and related government agencies are facing. The country is almost fully under lockdown, and therefore even delivering essential medical equipment takes a lot of planning, getting permissions, and finding courageous volunteers to deliver them.

I write this with some satisfaction because all of you – well-wishers, charitable foundations, community organizations, nonprofits, public institutions, and private sector corporations -- have offered support and have opened your hearts and wallets to ensure that we at Sewa International can procure the needed medical equipment and medicines and find ways to deliver them as quickly as possible to India. We have already shipped more than 5,400 oxygen concentrators of the 7,482 that we have procured. We have partner organizations in India who are working 24/7 in delivering the medical equipment to where they are most urgently needed. They have already distributed more than 4,000 medicine kits and 5,000 essential kits. We have had the support of cargo carriers like UPS who have come to our aid by offering to ship our first batch of oxygen-concentrators free. We are grateful to Air India, United Airlines, and Airlink who have helped us in carrying our cargo for free or at significantly discounted rates. Scores of vendors and transporters have gone out of their way to help us and we are truly grateful to them for helping us during this tough time.

This second surge of COVID-19 caught us all by surprise. We are focused on serving people, and we will do it with your help. I am happy to let you know that our Sewa family members are all deeply invested in making our relief effort a success. I wish I could show you the large number of Sewa volunteers and how hard they are working, where they are working, and what they are doing. In fact, it is a challenge keeping up with the flow of information from the eighteen teams that are working across the country on daily situation assessments, searching for information on vendors and suppliers of medical equipment, negotiating with shipping companies and airlines, the potential for installing oxygen plants in hospitals, monitoring phone calls, managing the social media fundraising campaign and so much more. All this is while our volunteers continue efforts in the US to fight COVID challenges by distributing food, partnering, and helping FEMA in vaccination drives, and various other service programs.

Please continue to support us. Follow us on social media. Please visit our website daily to see the updates. Keep us in your thoughts and please pray for the wellbeing of India, Indians and all those helping defeat COVID-19.

Arun Kankani
Arun Kankani
President, Sewa International



'Help India Defeat COVID-19' Campaign: Our Support in a Time of Crisis

Almost overnight the second wave of COVID-19 had begun to overwhelm India, and we had to act quickly. As we had done before, we started with a Facebook campaign called "Help India Defeat COVID-19" on April 23 to raise awareness here in the US and we started raising funds to launch our disaster relief work in India. Over the last three weeks, we have raised over \$7 million from more than 106,000 donors and we have bought 7,482 oxygen concentrators and shipped most of them as part of our multi-pronged effort to help India. We have raised another five million through our website campaign, and we have received some major funding from corporations, businesses, and individuals, all totaling about \$16 million.

India is in the middle of a devastating COVID-19 surge that has set records for new infections and deaths and severely strained the country's healthcare system. Last week, India became the second country after the U.S. to surpass 20 million cases. The situation has dramatically exacerbated and caught the country off-guard. This has put an unprecedented load on the government and the health care system.

We have procured 7,482 oxygen-concentrators and airlifted 5,482 of them to India. Multiple shipments of concentrators from Atlanta to Delhi were flown by UPS free of charge. Air India has been distributing the consignment to seven cities in India. From there the medical equipment are being transported by road to over 21 cities across India.



As the situation on the ground has evolved, the need for relief has shifted in India from oxygen concentrators to other equipment. There is an acute shortage of ventilator beds in hospitals across India for patients severely affected. Also, oximeters are not readily available for COVID positive patients. We have therefore procured 20,500 pulse oximeters, 250 ventilators, 256 co-ventilators and other much needed life-saving medical equipment and we have shipped most of these to India via UPS over the past two weeks.

With lockdowns impacting livelihood of poor people, Sewa is also providing food and medicines to families, orphanages, and senior citizen centers across the country. Working with its partners in India, Sewa International has distributed more than 4,000 medicine kits, and 5,000 essential kits. Over 1000 Sewa volunteers are engaged in this distribution efforts on ground. They are being helped by over 10,000 partner volunteers.

Sewa International, India, has created a Digital Helpdesk to provide critical information on ambulance services, hospital bed availability, and blood and medicinal supplies to people. There are over 200 volunteers managing this helpdesk. They have also launched a website -- www.covidsewa.com -- offering an up-to-date dashboard for self-help. As Indian hospitals and care agencies struggle to meet this dire medical emergency, Sewa volunteers have been working across the country, in small towns and big cities to offer information about hospital bed availability, medical equipment distribution, vaccinations, and testing for COVID-19. The helpdesk is also getting help by many US volunteers who are connecting Indians in US seeking help for their family members in India.

TWO WEEKS' REPORT HELP INDIA DEFEAT COVID-19 MAY 10, 2021



\$20+ MILLION GOAL **\$16+ MILLION RAISED** **\$6+ MILLION SPENT**

- 7482 OXYGEN CONCENTRATORS PROCURED
- 5482 OXYGEN CONCENTRATORS SHIPPED
- 20,500 PULSE OXIMETERS PROCURED
- 250 VENTILATORS PROCURED
- 256 CO-VENTILATORS PROCURED
- 1178 BIPAP & CPAP PROCURED
- 4000+ MEDICINE KITS DISTRIBUTED
- 5000+ ESSENTIAL KITS DISTRIBUTED

T MODEL BASED STRATEGY TO FIGHT COVID-19
Breadth: Awareness, Essentials and Digital Helpdesk Depth: Oxygen, and Vaccination



- DIGITAL HELPLINE
- MEDICAL EQUIPMENT
- ESSENTIAL KITS
- CASE MANAGEMENT
- VACCINE & PLASMA DRIVE
- SENIOR CITIZENS

eGlobalDoctors
We are here **TO HELP**
Daily Free Consultation for Covid 19 Patients
EXPERT DOCTORS FROM US, UK WILL HELP TO MANAGE COVID 19 INFECTION.
FOR DOCTORS: If you want to volunteer please register at: www.eglobaldoctors.com
FOR COVID 19 PATIENTS: Please join the team sharing Knowledge: 9:00 AM - 9:30 AM India Standard Time (IST). Please join the team call by visiting: www.eglobaldoctors.com

Together we serve better
1000+ VOLUNTEERS ENGAGED IN DISTRIBUTION
200+ VOLUNTEERS FOR HELP DESK
10,000+ VOLUNTEERS FROM PARTNERS
18 STATES COVERED
25 NODAL CENTERS

WE'RE LIVE NOW! **RIGHT** INFO TIME Let's care for each other
www.covidsewa.com
Driven by 100+ Volunteers

OUR PARTNERS IN THIS CAUSE



We have reached out to other partners and waiting for their consent to use their logo in our reports.

Together we serve better
DONATE NOW
<https://sewausea.org/Donate>

HELP INDIA
DEFEAT COVID-19



Donate with confidence
www.sewausea.org/donate
BANK WIRE TRANSFER INFORMATION
Address: Chase Bank, P O Box 182051 Columbus, OH 43218 - 2051, ABA number: 111000614
SWIFT Code: CHASUS33, Acct. no.: 623857831
Bank account holder's name: Sewa International Inc.,

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We know that Facebook is one of the most familiar and immensely popular social media networks, which therefore makes it an admirable platform not only to share personal news and views, but which also offers organizations and businesses opportunities to extend their campaigns and businesses. Many people get connected with their family, friends, and professional connections through social media, since tags and sharing enhance users' ability to connect with others. Sewa International has created and launched Facebook campaigns and streamed several programs on Facebook live over the past year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, as the second wave of the pandemic began to swamp India, it was decided to launch another fundraising campaign with a modest \$500,000 goal.

The modest goal of \$500,000 has now been changed, three times, and now stands at \$10 million. As of May 15, Sewa has raised \$7.89 million, with more than 106,000 individual donors! In a matter of 28 days, from April 17, 2021 to May 14, 2021 Sewa posts had reached out to 796,840 people. There are 9,295 page likes, which is up 261 percent. In the same 28 days there were 3,924 actions and 108,427 total page views, out of whom 90,734 people have viewed the videos. As an added feather to Sewa's cap, there are 10,576 consistent followers on the page. In comparison, the total donation collected in 2020 by Sewa was just \$218,579.

HELP INDIA

TO DEFEAT THE SECOND
WAVE OF **COVID-19**

DONATE NOW

<https://sewausea.org/Donate/>

**LIFE SAVING
MEDICAL EQUIPMENT**
(Oxygen Concentrators, Ventilators etc)



Sewa International, USA

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In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sewa has been working to help people stay informed, safe, and connected through social media. Life in Covid times is tough for all, but tougher for low-income families due to lockdown in many states of India. To lessen their burden to some extent Sewa, along with its partner organizations, has been distributing groceries and necessary food kits, since April 2020. Now, Sewa is sending oxygen concentrators, oximeters, Bipap and Cpap machines, required medicines, etc., to many hospitals and Covid patients across India, and the successful Facebook fundraising campaign has boosted Sewa's resolve and strength.

The Facebook campaign has been successful for a variety of reasons: the overwhelming nature of the second wave of the pandemic; the number of people affected in big cities, and thus the information about them broadcast quickly by the media; the number of people in the US whose families and friends have been affected; and the stories of overwhelmed hospitals and care centres from where our family and friends were being turned away because of a lack of beds and medical equipment.

We heard the cry and we sought help, and people have responded. It is a matter of time now that we use this money effectively, quickly and ensure that the trust that people have put in us by donating their hard-earned money will go to relieving the stress and anxiety of people back home.

Your Dāna, Our Thanks

More than 106,000 donors have contributed via our Facebook fundraising campaign, a whopping \$7.9 million over the past three weeks, since Sewa International started the campaign on April 25th at 10:37 AM Eastern Standard Time. That is an average of \$75 per donor. This is the hard-earned money of people, many who have felt the direct effects of the pandemic sweeping India now. We wish we can send each one of you a personalized thank you card. Who knows, if our volunteers can find some time over the next two months, at least an electronic thank you may make it to your digital doorstep. But this is a collective thank you note, and we appreciate both your contribution to this effort and for your trust in us.

Along with our Facebook campaign, we have had a campaign on the Sewa International website, and we have raised more than \$4.8 million from that campaign. Finally, we have urged corporations and foundations to support our causes, as well as groups of professionals and individual large donors. Together, we have raised about \$16 million till now.

In life, which we Hindus know and accept, some individuals have more wherewithal than others. Our life is a journey of many lifetimes, and we acknowledge that because of the “karmic payback” some get larger paychecks! Among those who earn more or have earned more there are those who have also the urge to do more for their fellow beings and come to the aid of people in distress. We therefore wish to acknowledge the generosity of these individuals, as well as that of businesses and corporations, for their willingness to join hands with us to bring some relief to the people in India.

Dāna, in Sanskrit, means “detached charity” or “philanthropy to the deserving”. Dāna, with damah (self-restraint) and daya (compassion) are the three major aspects of a virtuous life. The significance of dāna is acknowledged in all the Hindu sacred texts, and it is said that dāna leads to acquiring puṇya and destroying pāpa. It is said the Brahma ordained that since human beings are full of lōbha (greed) and tend to hoard they have to offer dāna as it constitutes a form of discipline to erase the effects of past misdeeds -- prāyaschitta sādhana. It is also said that offering dāna is so significant that irrespective of how it is offered, the donor still acquires puṇya.

With this little preamble, we offer here for you, a picture that identifies some of our major donors and partners in this cause to defeat COVID-19. There are many more, and as and when we get permission from them, we will recognize them too publicly.



OUR PARTNERS IN THIS CAUSE



We have reached out to other partners and waiting for their consent to use their logo in our reports.

Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey Donates 2.5 Million to Sewa International

Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey has donated \$2.5 million in his personal capacity to Sewa International's COVID-19 relief fund for India. Dorsey's charitable organization, "#startsmall" released a statement saying "Sewa International is a Hindu faith-based, humanitarian, non-profit service organization. This grant will support the procurement of life-saving equipment such as oxygen concentrators, ventilators, BiPAP (Bilevel Positive Airway Pressure) and CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure) machines as part of Sewa International's 'Help India Defeat COVID-19' campaign," and Dorsey himself tweeted that he was donating \$15 million "split between CARE, AIDINDIA, and SewaUSA".



Jack Dorsey, co-founder of Twitter and Square, is no stranger to humanitarian help. In April 2020, he pledged \$1 billion of his shares in Square, more than 25% of his total net worth, toward relief efforts for COVID-19. Much of this has gone to organizations like food banks, homeless shelters, and schools, providing essential services for traditionally underserved populations and to those disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. His "#startsmall" organization has a total value of \$3.5 billion, of which it has already donated \$380 million.

Jack Dorsey's donation highlights Sewa International's campaign and is a testament of the good work being done by our partners in India to fight the second wave. "Sewa International is happy that CEOs of multinational corporations and ordinary citizens of America are coming to the aid of India in this hour of need and is thankful that they have put their trust in the organization to offer medical aid in India quickly, efficiently, and professionally," said Swadesh Katoch, Sewa's Vice President for Disaster Recovery.

T-Model offers a NorthStar for India Relief during COVID-19

To combat the second COVID-19 surge in India, Sewa International, Bharat, has built a comprehensive T-Model of intervention to guide and prioritize disaster relief effort on the ground. This model was built on the experiences of the first COVID-19 surge last year by augmenting with activities that are more applicable with the current needs.

The horizontal axis in the "T" identifies the broad set of interventions designed to provide quick relief to drive immediate impact across the board in saving lives and livelihoods in India. Sewa International is running a program on awareness about COVID-19 and how to prevent it from spreading it in communities. We deliver essentials items in poor communities impacted by the pandemic. These could be things like medicines, food, and feminine hygiene products. To help provide accurate guidance on hospital bed availability and oxygen supply, Sewa India has set up a 24-hour helpline staffed by Sewa volunteers in India.



The vertical axis in the "T" identifies interventions designed to ensure we are systematically strengthening India and providing long term sustainability with an immediate layer of protection against the pandemic. Sewa International has started sending life-saving equipment like oxygen concentrators and ventilators from the US and other countries around the world directly to hospitals across India. We are helping with vaccination efforts in communities to help immunize the people against the disease. Finally, we are working with doctors against the pandemic to offer mental health assistance to maintain a positive outlook during this stressful time.

Sewa International's Atlanta "Control Room": The Quiet Volunteers Working Round the Clock

Within a matter of days, in mid-April, the news from India was basically one of an overwhelmed country that could not cope with the surge of a second wave of COVID-19. We began to hear of a new variant of the virus, the B.1.617, which was deadlier, more virulent, and more easily transmitted. Overnight, we began to hear from our families or friends who were affected. Panic-stricken messages flooded social media, and there was little time to plan a careful, calibrated response. We had to swing into action.

Our National Marketing Director, Viswanath Koppaka, who was visiting his hometown, Hyderabad, was still there, and about to return to the US. Our Director of Communications, Vidyasagar Tontalapur, was also still in India. We were mostly focused on managing the many programs here in the US relating to COVID-19 services we were rendering – from weekend food distributions in the Bay Area and in Houston to reaching out to churches in Georgia to distribute PPE, food, and other essentials, and young volunteers in New Jersey getting senior citizens registered to get the vaccination shots.

Our Indian partners were also watching the healthcare system move back to dealing with other medical and health needs that were either ignored or had to be set aside during the first wave. Doctors and hospitals had begun to reconvert the dedicated COVID-19 facilities to their traditional uses. In fact, India was so confident about having slowed down the spread of the virus that it had begun to export medical resources to other countries that needed them. But April 15 saw India recording an unexpected increase -- with more than 200,000 cases daily. Big cities were the most affected, and the capital New Delhi recorded such a surge that twenty-five patients died due to oxygen shortages in a government hospital.

Sewa International has a commendable record in aiding communities faced with disaster, and the indefatigable Swadesh Katoch, VP, Disaster Recovery, swung into action with his team here in the US. He got the Sewa International Bharat partners to begin listing and sending us information about what was needed, where, and what we could do.



Pic: The Control Room at GC Ingredients with Sewa Volunteers Busy at Work

We started with a modest Facebook fundraising campaign of raising \$500,000 to procure some oxygen-concentrators and ventilators but realized quickly how deeply people across the US had been affected as news came flooding of family members in trouble, people dying, and people pleading for help. Realizing the gravity of the disaster, a “Control Center” was set up at GC Ingredients, Inc., the business that is owned by Sewa’s Atlanta Chapter President, Srikanth Gundavarapu. With some tables, chairs, a large TV monitor for beaming Zoom calls in a quickly readied room, the team members began work with their personal laptop computers.

The team’s task has been multi-fold: (1) seeking information from Sewa’s Indian partners about the need of specific equipment; (2) locating businesses and industries that manufacture and sell them in the US; (3) ordering those equipment and transporting them to the GC Ingredients warehouse for storing; (4) working with cargo carriers like UPS and commercial airlines that were offering to airlift the equipment; (5) ensuring that all needed paperwork at the US end is correct and ready for airlifting the medical equipment and medicines; (5) validating that the equipment arrived with the necessary documents for Indian authorities to quickly release them for pickup from our partners; and (6) sharing that information with the communication and marketing teams here to coordinate the work of some eighteen teams with about 550 people. This keeps the “Control Room” busy and humming all day and all night long.

Every day, including on weekends, the logistics team and the procurement team is present in the “Control Room”. Present on premises and rotating duties are Srikanth Gundavarapu, Swadesh Katoch, Gaurav Singal, Venkat Sunderarajan, Madhavi Gunasekaran, Pratik Patel, Yashwant Belsare, Rita Belsare, as well as many remote volunteers. We also have volunteers visiting the “Control Room” as needed for coordinating activities and delivering breakfast, lunch, and dinner to the folks working there.

These men and women have dedicated so much of their time and energy to do the silent but critical work necessary in this time of crisis. We know they have lots of stories to share with us, but we must let them focus on their work now. However, they deserve a big thank you! Om!



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