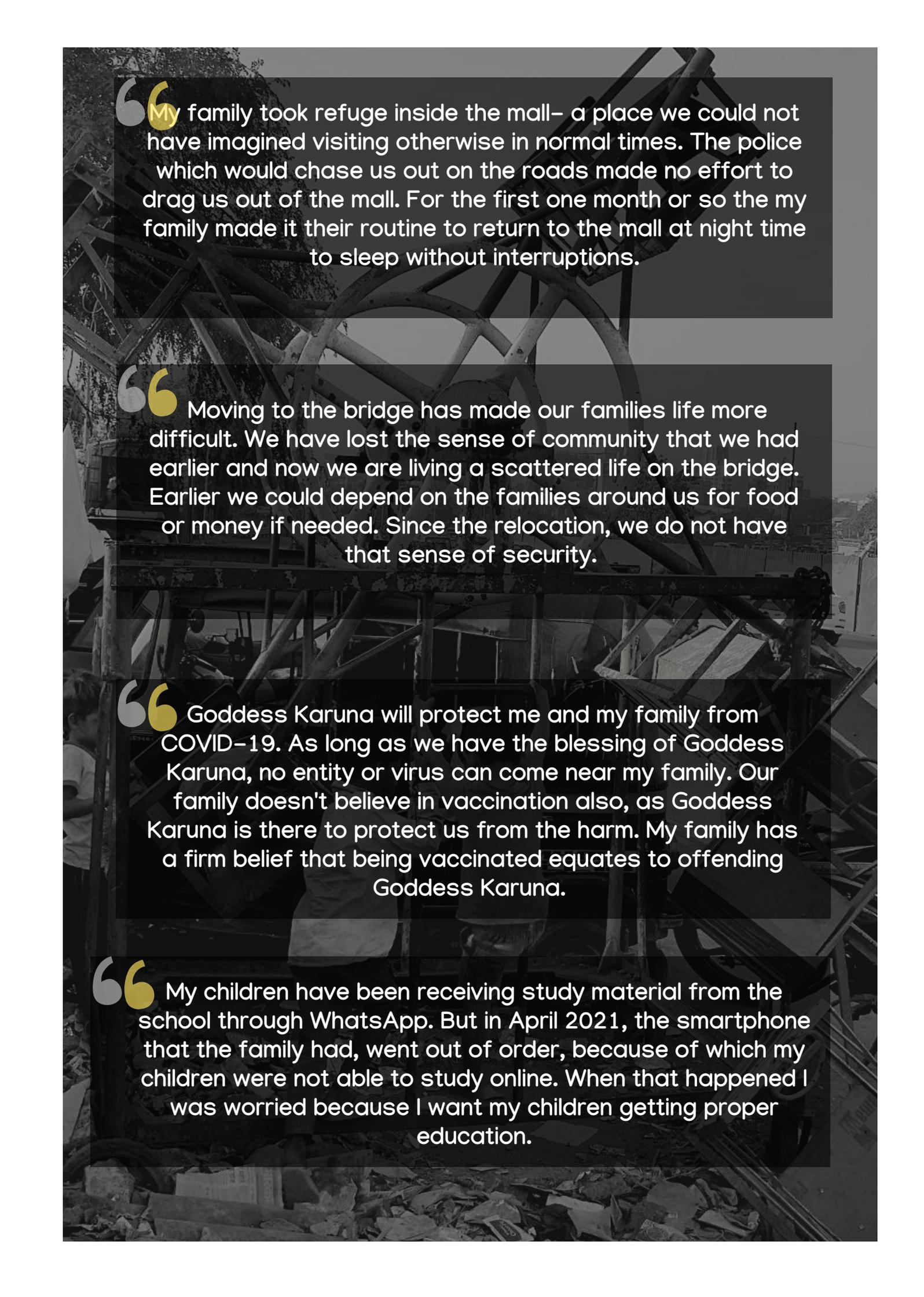


UNSETTLED FOREVER

A RESEARCH STUDY BY SANMAAN, PRERANA
DECEMBER 2021

SUPPORTED BY EDUCO



“My family took refuge inside the mall– a place we could not have imagined visiting otherwise in normal times. The police which would chase us out on the roads made no effort to drag us out of the mall. For the first one month or so the my family made it their routine to return to the mall at night time to sleep without interruptions.

“Moving to the bridge has made our families life more difficult. We have lost the sense of community that we had earlier and now we are living a scattered life on the bridge. Earlier we could depend on the families around us for food or money if needed. Since the relocation, we do not have that sense of security.

“Goddess Karuna will protect me and my family from COVID-19. As long as we have the blessing of Goddess Karuna, no entity or virus can come near my family. Our family doesn't believe in vaccination also, as Goddess Karuna is there to protect us from the harm. My family has a firm belief that being vaccinated equates to offending Goddess Karuna.

“My children have been receiving study material from the school through WhatsApp. But in April 2021, the smartphone that the family had, went out of order, because of which my children were not able to study online. When that happened I was worried because I want my children getting proper education.

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Dear Readers!

It is our honour to acknowledge the contributions of many people without whom this study “Unsettled Forever” would not have seen the light of the day.

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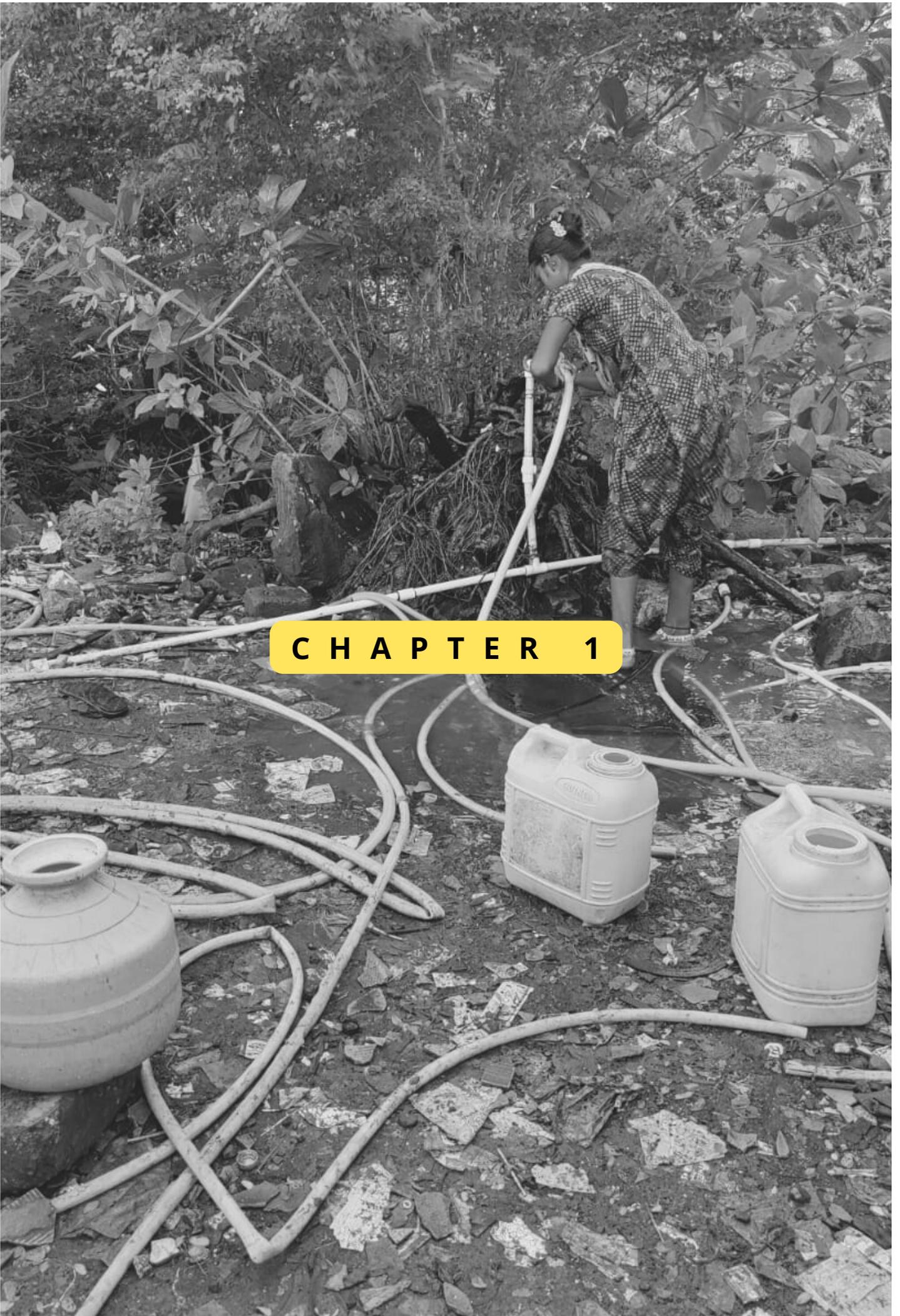
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Abbreviations

BMC	Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
CCI	Child Care Institution
CfB	Children found in begging
CiL	Covid induced Lockdown
CNCP	Children in Need of Care and Protection
Covid-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
DNTs	De-Notified Tribes
ESGT	Eliminating Second-Generation Trafficking
JJA	Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015
JJS	Juvenile Justice System
LSE	Life Skills Education
PDS	Public Distribution System
RLAs	Red-Light Areas
SIR	Social Investigation Report
SS	Sample Survey
OSCC	One Stop Crisis Centers
WHO	World Health Organization





C H A P T E R 1



Prerana is a civil society organization (CSO) that started working in the Red-Light Areas (RLAs) of Mumbai in 1986 first with a view to eliminating second-generation trafficking (ESGT) i.e., trafficking of the children of RLA based prostituted trafficked victim women into the sex trade and allied activities of the sex trade, or bonded labor. To achieve this Prerana evolved several path-breaking interventions, piloted them, built a success story out of each intervention, and disseminated them for wide mainstreaming. Prerana expanded the scope of its intervention to address the issues of the prostituted women of the RLAs specially to fight violence against them and to protect their legal and human rights. It also started addressing other child protection and child rights issues, including working with children rescued from commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) through Post Rescue Operations (PRO), children rescued from begging in public places through its project 'Sanmaan' (the Honour), and child sexual abuse through its project 'Aarambh' (the Beginning).

About Sanmaan

Project Sanmaan (which means honor) aims to enable the children found begging on the streets to enjoy their right to wellbeing and

dignity and break the intergenerational cycle of begging in Mumbai and Navi Mumbai. Through the approaches of prevention, protection, rehabilitation and advocacy Sanmaan intends to work with the Right holders i.e., the children, adolescents, their families, and other duty bearers with a rights-based, and development-oriented approach. Children found begging are not safe and are vulnerable to different kinds of maltreatment, violence and exploitation. Early in 2016, the police authorities in Mumbai started a drive wherein they rescued children found begging. Earlier the children and their families/adult escorts who were found or suspected to be begging used to be taken into custody and mostly dropped far outside the city limits and away from civilization. Only a few children would be brought into the fold of the juvenile justice system (JJS) by producing them before the Child Welfare Committee set up under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (JJA,) and would be usually admitted to Child Care Institutions for residential care. The children were not only being separated from their parents and institutionalized, but their fundamental rights to education and development were also routinely violated.



Though socio-economically marginalized, what compounded their plight was the stigma, the discrimination, and the social exclusion they were subjected to because of their special background of having historically belonged to the 'ex-criminal Tribes', post-1951 called as the 'De-notified Tribes (DNTs)'. Having been inducted into begging was violating the children's right to dignity and well-being and their fundamental rights to survival, development, protection, and participation. Under the Sanmaan Project, Prerana started an intervention to work towards sustained and holistic rehabilitation of children after being rescued and brought into the fold of the JJ system and ensuring their participation in their rehabilitation. Eventually, besides covering those rescued by the police Sanmaan started reaching out to these children and their families through a community based outreach strategy to ensure that they have access to their rights and resources.

Rationale for taking up the study:

Problem of children in begging

There are several categories of apparently abandoned children who happen to live on and off the streets of Indian metropolises.

They are commonly often stigmatized and erroneously identified by the nature of their economic survival strategies. Some are seen working in informal usually exploitative wage sectors and called 'child labor'. Some of them work on the streets or at night sleep on the streets or do both are incorrectly called as 'street children'. There are others who hawk at the crowded traffic signals selling toys, mirchi-limboo (a string of lemons and chilies meant to ward off the evil), flowers, fruit, magazines, etc. There are some who alternate between hawking and begging, and there are still some others who only beg. Most of them found in hawking and begging are boys but there are girls too. They have been a subject of concern to social workers, child welfare and development interventionists, and social researchers.

Sanmaan works with the children found in begging (CfB) and living in open camp-like places or on the streetside in Greater Mumbai, Raigad and Thane districts of Maharashtra, India. These children don't seem to have a secured abode. Having neither house nor access to basic amenities like water, toilets or electricity has made their situation abysmal. The children seem far away from formal education, recreation, leisure, or childhood.

Their families do not have a political clout as they are numerically insignificant to make a vote bank. The politicians, administrators and other metropolitan elites consider them as sheer nuisance or an eye sore and pressurize the police to clean their beautiful city by evicting them. The police is mostly found hostile towards them.

The presence of children in begging at the traffic signals is an eye sore for the governing elites. If the traffic signal is closer to the airport or located in any other high-profile location in the city then the pressure on the police to 'cleansing the area of beggars' is enormous. Although they cannot be driven out from the city permanently, they are repeatedly evicted from those areas and dropped far away from the city in some ill connected, ill served locations. Their households and possessions are destroyed so as to teach them a lesson. The city recurrently witnesses such cleansing drives by the police and the civic authorities against their own citizens who have been provided with no honorable livelihood or 'decent work' options. Going by the definition of 'children in need of care and protection' given in the JJA the children who are found in begging come under the Children in Need of Care and Protection (CNCP) category and hence it is the responsibility of the state to provide to them the required care and protection. In reality, these children are far from any such protection and care.

De-notified, Nomadic and Semi Nomadic Tribes:

The term 'De-notified Tribes' refers to the communities which were notified under the several versions of Criminal Tribes Acts enforced during the British rule between 1871 and 1947 throughout the Indian territory.

'The denotified communities include ex-criminal, nomadic and wandering tribes, earth diggers, fishermen, boatmen and palanquin bearers, salt makers, washermen, shepherds, barbers, scavengers, basket makers, furriers and tanners, landless agricultural laborers, watermen, toddy tapers, camel-herdsmen, pig-keepers, pack bullock carriers, collectors of forest produce, hunters and fowlers, corn parchers, primitive tribes (not specified as Scheduled Tribes), exterior classes (not specified as Scheduled Castes), and begging communities etc. These very names amply connote their social and educational backwardness.[1]

Incidentally, in Mumbai and surrounding districts these families belong to such ethnic communities known as 'De-notified Tribes' earlier known as the 'Criminal Tribes.'

COVID 19 and the nationwide lockdown

On 11th March 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic. COVID-19 which is an abbreviation of the name Corona Virus Disease 2019 is a serious viral infection caused by a newly discovered (hence called Novel) virus. The disease is spread by coming in direct contact with the respiratory droplets of an infected person. The death count and the speed of the spread sent a wave of scare across the globe. Currently, after multiple attempts in various countries, a significant number of people have been vaccinated against this virus. Learning from past experiences, as also advised by the experts as one of the tested-out approaches, is to stop the spread through various measures that emphasize social distancing. These include quarantining the infected person, following social distancing to minimize contact, virtual stoppage of public life through the measure of lockdown and confining individuals to their homes.

On 24th March, 2020 with the rapid spread of the disease across the globe and in India, the Prime Minister of India declared a nationwide lockdown, with a notice of about 4 hours to the citizens. The lockdown prohibited all public movements including transportation, economic activities, social gatherings, and closed all markets, eating places, workplaces, schools and colleges. The second wave of the pandemic hit India in March 2021. In spite of intensive global and national efforts of more than one year, the pandemic continued to spread unchecked and has taken a heavy toll on human health and the economy even in the year 2021.

The precautionary measures emphasized on sanitizing hands frequently, wearing clean masks while going out of home, as far as possible staying at home unless it is an emergency, isolating a person if he/she is showing any symptom of Covid-19 etc. Adopting all these measures however became challenging for the families living in street like conditions because of having very limited infrastructural facilities and resources to maintain hygiene and for self-care.

Families engaged in Alms Seeking and their life during the Pandemic

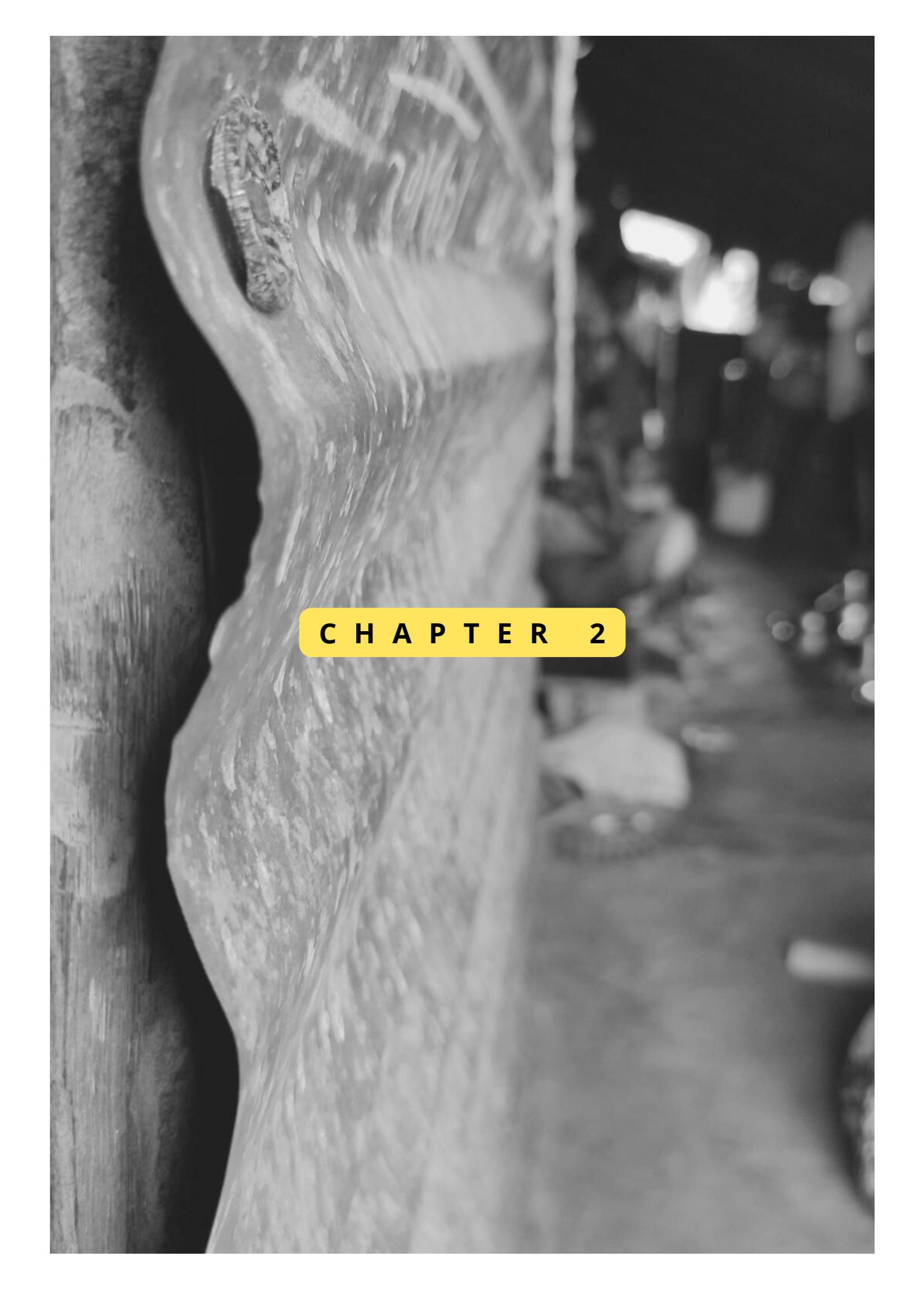
Many of the families Sanmaan works with have migrated from their native places to Mumbai or Navi Mumbai. These families earned by hawking, making garlands and begging on the streets. These communities are dependent on daily wages. Almost all of them work in the informal sector. Sanmaan works closely with 3 communities at Ghansoli, Chembur and Sathenagar, which have a population of approximately 1000 such people in total. As per the findings of the Rapid Assessment Survey (RAS) conducted by Sanmaan in April 2020, with

the lockdown and several other restrictions during the pandemic, every income generating activity of these families came to a halt. With no public transportation, mobility of these families was severely affected. Government only permitted movement of those who were part of essential services. This affected the families who earn on a daily basis and live hand to mouth. Hence, the daily wage earners were unemployed and soon ran out of their savings to be able to afford their daily essentials.

The country did not have any experience of collectively dealing with such catastrophe in the last 50 years. Not having adequate information about the pandemic made the people feel extremely helpless. As people from all strata were groping in the dark in this situation, the vulnerability of these marginalized people was compounded during the pandemic.

The problems of these already vulnerable marginalized people seemed to have multiplied. To be able to help them tackle their challenges and overcome their plight it is essential first to understand their traumatizing experience of eviction and its after-effects/implications, their income and the safety, education, development and wellbeing of children during the pandemic, health status of the children and family members, availability of resource material, status of children's education etc. The present study was undertaken with this felt need.

The data collection for this research was done from June to September 2021. The data analysis and interpretation from July to October 2021.



C H A P T E R 2



Research Design

Objectives:

- To study the most apparent impact of COVID-19 induced Lockdown /pandemic on the daily lives of the families whose children are found begging and rescued from begging
- To study the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the health, and daily lives of the families whose children are found begging and rescued from begging.
- To study the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the daily lives of the families whose children are found begging and rescued from begging.
- To study the pattern of reverse migration and relocation among the families after the announcement of the lockdown in 2020.
- To study the effect of eviction among these families during the pandemic.
- To study the nature of support systems, and social provisioning available for these families, and their accessibility of the same.
- To identify and document the relief services availed by them and the source of relief providers.
- To study the impact of the COVID-imposed-Lockdown (CiL) on the education of the children and identify their concerns in doing online mode of studies.
- To study the impact CiL has made on the earnings and indebtedness of these families.
- To gather suggestions from the respondents that can help us devise ways to help them deal with their problems of day to day living precipitated by CiL.

Geographic Area of the Study: The study is conducted in certain identified locations such as Chembur, Ghansoli, Churchgate etc within the cities of Greater Mumbai and Navi Mumbai in the state of Maharashtra where the Sanmaan project of Prerana has been in operation.

Units of Inquiry: Parents/guardians of the children

Nature of Data: Primary data in terms of responses by the respondent who were the parents/guardians of the children found begging and covered under the Sanmaan project.

Units of Analysis:

- Forced migration, relocation and eviction of the participants during the pandemic
- Overall health (both physical as well as mental) of the family members during the pandemic
- Awareness about the pandemic and access to healthcare facilities during the pandemic
- Economic condition before and after the pandemic, lending, borrowing and indebtedness
- Impact of the pandemic on the household income
- Means of livelihood
- Educational situation of the children during the pandemic
- Leisure activities among the children during the pandemic
- Issues related with the Identity and entitlement documents of the family members
- Access to basic amenities such as water, bathing, toilets etc. during the pandemic
- Material and social provisioning during the pandemic
- Encounter of the families with Police and other civic authorities.

Data Collection

Tools of Data Collection: Unstructured Interviews following guidelines*

Technique of Data Collection: Guidelines for unstructured interviews were developed as tools of primary data collection at the first stage followed by piloting the tools with

the pre-contacted participants (parents/guardians of the children) in order to identify gaps in the inquiry, feasibility of the line of inquiry with various participants, ease of administering the tools, and the time taken to administer each tool. Experience gathered from the pilot primary data collection round using the first phase tools (Interview Guidelines) was completed for six cases in between June 10th to 12th 2021 while the other 4 cases were completed by September. A total of 10 parents/guardians of pre-contacted children were part of the first phase of data collection.

Research Methodology:

A sample survey (SS) presupposes basic knowledge about the phenomenon to be studied. A SS aims to arrive at a generalization about a phenomenon or entity inductively by exposing the members of the sample to a standard set of stimuli, by gathering their responses to each of the stimuli and then analyzing the responses to each of the stimuli in an aggregate manner across the number of members in the sample. It is important to note in a SS the responses to the different stimuli within a given member of the sample are not analyzed across one another. The set of standard stimuli in a SS are often represented by an Interview Schedule which is expected to be highly structured, sequenced, field tested and finetuned. It also presupposes the knowledge about the universe and its homogeneity and heterogeneity in order to arrive at the proportion or number of the members in the sample for it to become representative. For the phenomenon under the study such knowledge was absent and hence the sample survey method was not suitable and amenable for its scientific study.

Every scientific study dreams that the situation other than or external to the phenomenon under study should remain largely unchanging (constant) during the provision of the stimuli and gathering of the response. In the experimental methods this condition is sought to be met very rigorously. This explains the constant and controlled conditions in a laboratory. In social research it is next to impossible to control the internal or external situations.

These difficulties get accentuated while studying the phenomenon like catastrophe and pandemics which hit humanity once in a century or that infrequently as the accumulated prior scientific knowledge minimizes the controlled factors and provides no tips on - What questions to ask? What changes to observe? What changes to be measured and how?

The Case study method was adopted to conduct this inquiry where the entire phenomenon of the effect of COVID-19 on the families of the children engaged in begging has been considered as one case. To understand this phenomenon better ten parents/adult guardians of the ten pre-contacted children who are/were engaged in begging were interviewed.

Period of Data Collection:

From June 2021 to September 2021

Data processing:

Logical analysis

Social Case Study:

The option available to us was that of descriptive configurational case study where the case is the situation of children and their families found begging in public places during the CiL

· Limitations:

1. Due to the current crisis, a few respondents were not in the right frame of mind to answer the questions.
2. The team had limited time and resources to collect the data because of a range of restrictions on their movement during the pandemic.
3. Participants were hesitant to respond or unequipped to articulate responses to the questions related to their mental health.
4. Families had the pressure to keep looking for and grab wage earning opportunities and hence could not devote sufficiently for the inquiry
5. Some participants were impatient while responding to the unstructured interview.



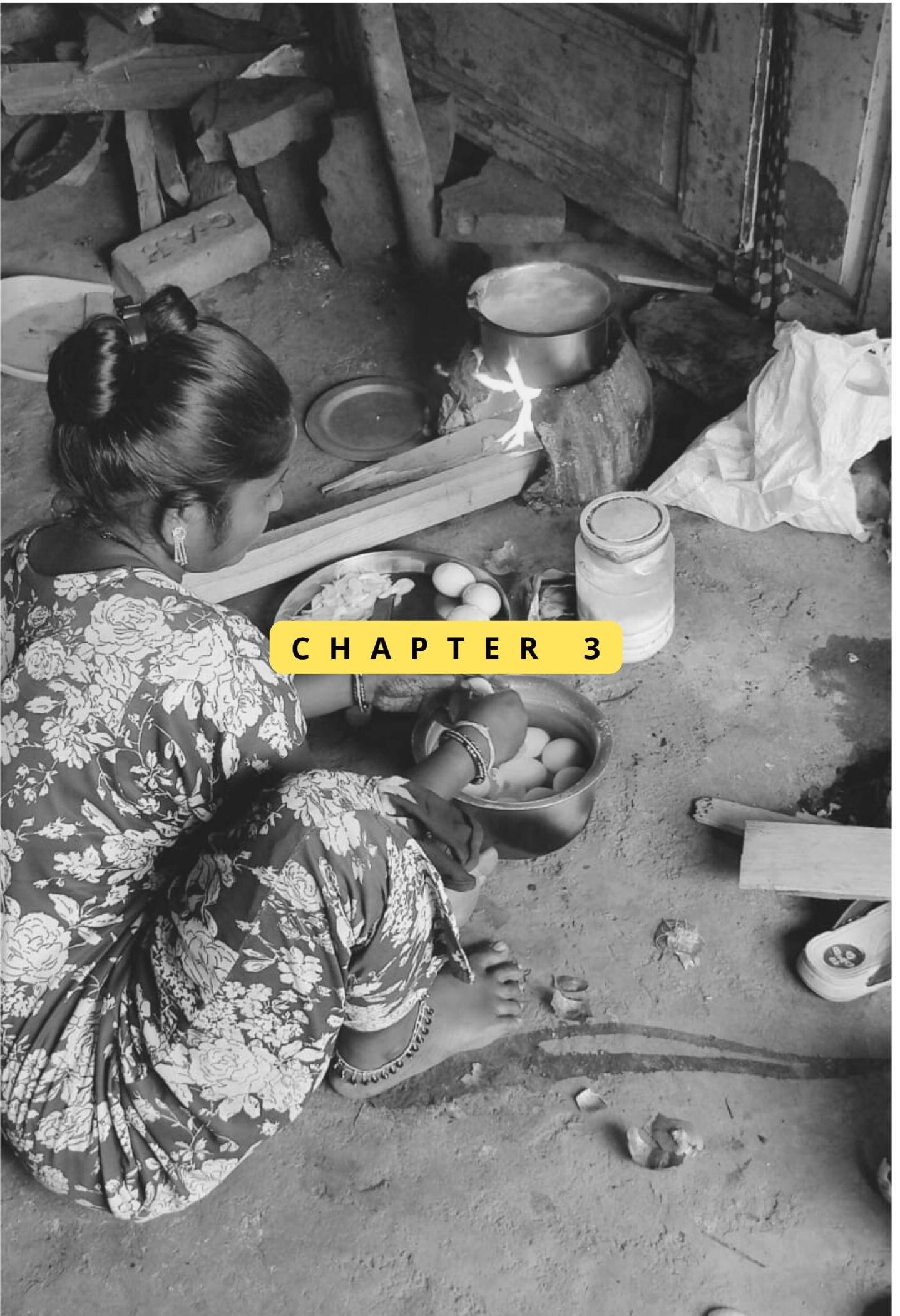
Ethical Protocol

Prior to gathering any primary data, the research team ensured obtaining an informed consent from all research respondents. In order to obtain the respondent's consent, a form* was prepared listing down the details of the objectives of the study, the process of participating in the study, data recording procedures to be followed, process for voluntary withdrawal from participation in the study, and details of how the research team plans to use the data gathered from the participant. At the start of each interaction with the respondent for gathering primary data, the investigators explained the contents of the consent form to the respondent to obtain their approval for participating in the study. Further, to ensure the protection of the identities of the child and parent respondents, the researchers have anonymized all data presented in this study.

The Ethical protocol was observed by:

- Maintaining the quality and integrity of the study throughout;
- Seeking informed consent from the respondents prior to the interviews and

- strictly considering respondents' privacy and; anonymity in the research report;
- Conducting the interviews in a closed setting which was either in Sanmaan's community center or at the participant's home;
- No name or any other clue to identifying a respondent or respondent's child was shared. The data collected have only been used for the purpose of this study and will be used for further publications by the organization, with the consent of the respondent and her child;
- Sensitivity was kept in mind at all times while conducting the research. A trigger warning was given in case of any upcoming triggering question or discussion during the interview process; And
- The interviewer withheld her biases during the interview process and maintained the objectivity of the responses received.



C H A P T E R 3

Case Study 1

Unstructured interview & qualitative data collection: Ms. Deepali Mistry

Respondent: Female, 28 Years, Mother/father of the child

Month of Interview: June 2021

1. Background of referral or contact with Prerana

In April 2016 the Mumbai Suburban Child Welfare Committee (CWC) No. 1 referred the cases of two children to Prerana for follow up. They had been rescued by the police at Churchgate from the situation of begging in a public place. Prerana has been following up with them since then.

2. Forced Migration, Relocation Eviction

Most of such children have been found to be belonging to the ex-criminal tribes which are since 1951 called as De-Notified Tribes. Their history shows extreme violation of human rights and denial of settled abode let alone settled livelihood. History shows that they kept running away from local atrocities in search of safer places where they will not be subjected to extreme ostracism and police brutalities. They are the current generation of such marginalized & brutalized communities.[2]

The families of these children were located on the footpath opposite Churchgate (the terminal station on western railway local train route) for app. 20 years. Their presence on the open space was considered illegal encroachment by the authorities that repeatedly tried to evict them from the same. They thus relocated themselves at a place in a newly urbanized area at Ghansoli in Navi Mumbai sometime in May 2021. The Covid induced Lockdown (CiL) had begun sometime in March 2020 and the families had started feeling a severe pinch of loss of livelihood as the economy which was already in a slowdown mode had suffered a decisive blow under the CiL. In absence of any secular non exploitative support system and in face of constant uprooting by the State the families relocated themselves to Ghansoli where some of their relatives lived. The relatives offered them a room to live by waiving off the rent for a few months in face of the calamity. For the first month of relocation the relatives also gave them money to manage their food and other essentials. Allegedly these relatives were engaged in drug peddling and could earn some income even in the time of total lockdown of all legitimate earning avenues.

The severity of the Pandemic and CiL was aggravated by the increased frequency of eviction drives as the authorities feared spread of the virus due to mobility of population. The police would unfailingly catch them sleeping by storming their camping sites at the dead of the night and start charging at them with a cane. They would pour cold water on them while they were asleep. The water would also make their food stocks and clothing wet. At times the police had taken away all their possessions and dumped them in the sea at the end of the road at Nariman point. That would destroy their documents of personal identity and entitlements like birth certificate, school leaving certificate, caste community certificate, below poverty line ration card, PAN card, Aadhar card, voter card etc. This the police knew was an effective blow and strong admonition so that they would not return to those sites from where they were evicted.

Many male members would get severely cane charged by the police. The men and children would be bundled off in the police van and dumped at some remote place with no clue of the coordinates. Often men and children returned the next day by walking over 6 to 7 hours.

During the interaction with Prerana social workers the families narrated an incidence that occurred a year prior to the CiL.

Once the police officials forcefully took the family members and abandoned them in the middle of the night in a forested area far outside Navi Mumbai. They had to walk without food or water for about 6 hours to reach the nearest railway station. The brutal attack got reported in the media and the authorities were forced to reflect upon their violent methods and give up the severe measures. Often the children got separated from their parents as they would go helter-skelter when the police came to evict them.

As of May 2021, while this family is staying in Ghansoli, some members of their extended family continue to camp in their earlier spot at Churchgate as their wage opportunities are getting back to normal with the gradual lifting of the lockdown.

The family under study is in conflict whether to reunite with their relatives still camping at Churchgate or to continue to stay in the room at Ghansoli and acquire a new livelihood and a new lifestyle. Their trauma of getting evicted lock stock and barrel back from Churchgate is fresh and at the new place they have not found their steady source of income.

The respondent's husband previously worked in the canteen in Mantralaya near Churchgate. His contract has now expired and as of May 2021 no family member has any sure and secure source of earning.

In the past, besides the husband's job the family would sell garbage bags, clips, decorative pens, hand fans, children's toys, etc. at Marine Lines or Nariman Point. There too the police would confiscate their goods and destroy them or keep it at the police station for days before returning so as to demotivate them from moving around in those places. The terror of the police eviction drives was such that the families had learnt to possess only two pairs of clothes as the police would destroy whatever they possessed. Often, they would live on a single pair of clothes as they would have no money to buy another pair.

No return tickets

The respondent said that she had her extended family back in Solapur district of Maharashtra. However, she did not share a cordial relationship with them. The people back home in the village interact with her only if they see some pecuniary gains.

They extended care for her children during school holidays only when she paid them. She could not approach any of them during the lockdown as she was sure they won't help. She hasn't visited them in Solapur for last 20 years. She visited them only during festivals or religious rituals under the community pressure.

3. Multidimensional Impact of Covid Induced Lockdown (CiL)

While the CiL smashed several critical aspects of their material lives including economy, health, and mobility it had many other effects too.

As there were no schools or wage work children were mostly free. As their mobility was restricted, they had to engage themselves in recreational activities in a limited space. One of the outcomes was frequent altercations and fights among them.

As the roads were practically abandoned by people and vehicles, they became easily available open places for children to play. In other times they would be scared to be on the road due to the fear of road accidents.

The families mentioned that the lockdown and mobility restrictions also offered them time to be together unlike in the, so called normal times, which they enjoyed.

The state had instructed the public to stay inside their houses and not to be seen in the open or in public places. A nearby Mall came very handy in an unexpected manner. It was a sprawling building now abandoned due to the CiL. The family took refuge inside the mall- a place they could not have imagined visiting otherwise in normal times. The police which would chase them out on the roads made no effort to drag them out of the mall. For the first one month or so the family made it their routine to return to the mall at night time to sleep without interruptions.

4. Situation of Children: Unlevelled field in obstacles race

The children are often first-generation learners. They have no stable abodes. They could not afford to go to the day time schools for seeking formal education as their problem of hunger, clothing and shelter remained unaddressed in that system of formal education. The optimum system of education which, in the given context, caters to their needs and thereby enables them to take education is the residential education model of tribal Ashram schools. During vacations even the Ashram schools are shut and children are sent out to fend for themselves till the schools reopen. Life and the ladder of upward mobility, that is, formal education is both full of obstacles and children race on unlevel fields.

The respondent mentioned that she has 4 children among which the eldest 2 are daughters, followed by a son and the youngest is also a daughter. The eldest is 14 years old, 2nd child is 12 years, 3rd child is 10 years and the youngest is 7 years old.

In April 2016, the eldest and 2nd eldest i.e., the 14- and 12-year-old were rescued by Churchgate police station from begging. Prerana was approached by the Mumbai Suburban Child Welfare Committee, to maintain follow up of the children and their siblings.

Before the lockdown, the respondent's 4 children studied in Ashram school in Solapur district of the state of Maharashtra. The children spent most of their year in Ashram school and during vacations they would stay with a distant relative in Solapur, Maharashtra. The respondent said that she pays her relatives for taking care of her children during vacations when the Ashram schools are closed. She and her husband have never wanted that the children stay on the streets,

especially after an incident where the children were “picked up” by the police because they were found begging and were subsequently placed in Children’s Home in Mankhurd, Mumbai. She added that children staying at Ashram school also indirectly and significantly helps the family financially as they don’t have to worry about spending money on the food and clothing of their children.

When the CiL was imposed and schools were shut down, her children came to stay with her at Churchgate, Mumbai. The children were however “caught” by the police during an eviction drive claiming that they were found begging during that time. This incident traumatized the eldest daughter and since then she decided to stay with their distant relative in Solapur instead of staying in Mumbai. The child decided that she would return to her Ashram school as and when it reopens.

The education of the children who stayed with the respondent, was adversely affected. None of them was able to access online education, as the family did not have a smart phone. The respondent further added that they did have a smart phone for a while but it was stolen, and the family couldn’t afford to buy a new one. The respondent shared that the family had finally managed to buy a smart phone a few months back.

When enquired, the respondent said that their children living in Ghansoli spend their time either playing or watching TV at their neighbour’s house. The children also attend the sessions conducted by Prerana (Life Skill sessions) in the community. The children spend most of their days in the community, but some days they do accompany their relatives who sell Gajra’s (strings of fresh flowers adorned in the head) at a neighbouring area Sanpada in Navi Mumbai.

The respondent explained that she makes sure that her children wear masks, when leaving the community and wash their hands with soap before eating food. The respondent seemed aware about the importance of maintaining hand hygiene.

5. Pandemic and Health: Awareness, Access, Impact

The respondent reacted stating that a lot of Government measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 were very harsh and unwanted. She seemed agitated by it.

The respondent shared that she has heard about people been infected by COVID-19, but has herself never seen anyone down with COVID-19. The respondent added that even if she has such strong opinions about COVID-19 restrictions she still makes sure that every member in her family stays healthy and safe.

Whenever any of her family members get cold and cough, they are immediately taken to doctor and treated if the sickness persists. The respondent shared that they usually access private clinics, as the public centers are difficult to access because they are overcrowded and hostile.

When asked whether they are considering to register their name for vaccination, the respondent said they were not. Further adding she said that she and her husband were against getting vaccinated. When asked about the reason, the respondent explained that she has seen people around her falling ill post vaccination by getting fever, cold and cough, etc. She claimed that she had interacted with people who have been vaccinated, and they have suggested against it.

The respondent quoted the case of 2 community members who were vaccinated by their company/office where they work.

Since being vaccinated, both the members are suffering from varied health illnesses like constant fever, chills, cough. They can neither sleep nor eat well, and have been practically surviving on liquids. One of the members had boils in his mouth and the other suffered from high fever. The respondent was firm that neither of her family members will be vaccinated against Covid-19.

On asking about the precautionary measures against Covid-19 adopted by the family, the respondent said that they wash their hands before eating and after returning home from outside etc. They wear masks before leaving the community. The respondent shared that no one in the family had any health-related concerns till then.

6. Impact on Household Economy

The CiL seriously affected the overall economy. It was coupled with uncertainty about when and how it would revive. The macro level economy got a bad hit and the repercussions were faced at the individual household levels instantly. First and foremost, the wage sector got a beating with an indefinite and complete closure of the manufacturing and service sector establishments. Practically everyone in the slum where the respondents lived, lost their jobs, and wages. These families unlike the other residents in Churchgate and villagers of Ghansoli had no savings or stocks stored for a rainy day. Hunger and starvation affected them instantly. Her husband who earned approximately INR 10000 a month at the canteen in Mantralaya lost his job. However, after the lockdown was lifted during the first wave the family started working as daily wage earners where both the husband and wife worked 2-3 days in a week.

She would make INR 300-400 per day by hawking on the roads and at signals. With the roads abandoned by people and vehicles the earning came to an end.

Those who went out for wage work on road or construction used to bring back INR 400-500 per day prior to the Lockdown.

The earning during the lockdown was extremely meagre and uncertain. Even as unlocking has started the earnings are very meagre for a family of 5. While food-grains can be procured it cannot fetch the other essentials such as oils, soap, spices, fuel etc. Ironically a phone, a SIM card, talk time, and data etc. all have been added into the list of essentials. In such situation they are quite helpless and cannot stop their children from going out to beg to supplement the family income.

The pressure of survival made them borrow money from money lenders at exorbitant rates of interest such as 12% to 15% p.m. They have borrowed INR 14000 and the overall debt is increasing every week with the interest. "Begging by our children is an indispensable part of our life now", She said, "There is no doubt that the food grains distributed by government and others played a crucial role in keeping us alive. It is also true that the food-grains assistance was liberal and with little or no paperwork. But that was during the peak of the CiL. Now everything free has almost come to an end. The rest has gone back to be a part of the regular food distribution system like ration shops. And we have lost our documents and IDs during the eviction drives by the police and the municipality. At the most we may have a few photocopies but not the originals, and now the authorities demand the originals"

Regarding bank account information, the respondent, shared that she had a bank account, but in their native place in Solapur, Maharashtra. She wasn't however sure whether the account was still active. As per her knowledge she didn't receive governmental benefits or funds in her account during lockdown.

7. Proof of Existence: Identity Documents and Entitlement Documents

As it is most of these communities have a chronic problem of not having most of their documents to establish their personal identities or their eligibility for social protection measures by the state. On the top of that whatever little they had procured and preserved had been destroyed by the police and municipality during the eviction drives.

8. Provisioning of Essentials: Material and Social

The family shared that during the CiL, a couple of organizations like Prerana and Koshish helped them by providing comprehensive relief kits free of cost and at their doorsteps.

Joining hands with the CSOs gave them confidence and those living with them on the footpath questioned the officials on many occasions to know the reasons for their brutality against the people staying on footpath. They did not receive any satisfactory answers though.

The respondent requested Prerana to continue to support them with the relief kits (as of May 2021).

Due to rains (Monsoon of 2021), the work opportunities have thinned. The adults now get work at the most for 2 to 3 days in a week and earn INR 800-1200 a month which is just not enough to support the family of 5.

The respondent stated that during the 1st CiL in March 2020 they received cash from individual donors (INR 100-200 or food from individual donors or organizations several times.) However, in the 2nd CiL, i.e., April 2021, they did not receive much help from the people or charitable organizations.

The family members now barely manage to get 2 meals in a day and there are days where the children have to beg to bring food for the family.

9. Access to Basic Amenities: Bad to worse

The family did receive food grains from the State and later a few other essentials like soap, sanitary pads, oils, talk -time etc. from the voluntary organizations. But food grains needed cooking fuel, kerosene or LPG gas. No one gave the latter in the relief packets. In normal times the food grain assistance could have been valued greatly as adequate income supplement enabling the families to pay for the fuel. But in CiL times in absence of regular wage earnings, paying for the fuel became a heavy financial drag on the household economy. In the pre lockdown times the family used to buy kerosene @ INR 70 to INR 100 per litre from the ration shops under the PDS. However, now at Ghansoli they have to buy fuel in the open market where a gas cylinder costs INR 360 per refill. It weighs 7 kg and lasts for only 20 days. A local trader supplies the refills. A cylinder needs a registered connection by way of the regulator which they had to buy first which costs them INR 500

Prior to the relocation to Ghansoli the family used to access a public toilet by paying INR 5 per use and the bathing facility @ INR 10 per use. During 1st lockdown, in the months of March and April the toilets were free of cost, but later they had to pay to use these facilities. The family owns a smart phone, which as of May 2021 is used by the respondent's husband.

10. Mental Health

The respondent expressed that the evictions and relocations brought distress to the family members. The family members felt helpless witnessing their belongings being destroyed by the officials. The respondent shared that even though the situation was horrifying, the respondent felt that feeling depressed over the situation would only affect her children.

During the 1st CiL, i.e., March 2020 some family members were working on road side construction undertaken by the Municipality. The goal of ensuring well-being of her children pushed her to work harder and earn more. The respondent shared that the uncertainty of work and food for her children brought enormous stress. Often, she thought of running away from the situation but she could not because of her children, which made her to stay and struggle to survive.

The respondent shared that what added to the distress of the situation was that the family had debt and had no source of earning (for a long period) to repay the debt. Initially, people would maintain distance from them during COVID-19. The respondent shared that in the initial months of CiL she and her family had little information of COVID-19. She only came to know of maintaining distance in bits and pieces and she did not understand much of it. Subsequently, she came to know of some of the precautionary steps that should be taken but still felt a little lost because she did not know how much of it would help to keep her and her family safe from the pandemic. Regarding the use of substance in her community, the respondent shared that as the prices of such substances soared, it became difficult for them to procure them. For Example, a single packet of Vimal (flavoured tobacco) which is usually priced at INR 10, was sold for INR 80 – 90 in the community. The respondent said that most people in the community couldn't afford those substances at all, so the consumption of such substances decreased.



Case Study 2

Unstructured interview & qualitative data collection: Ms. Deepali Mistry
Respondent: Female, 28 Years, Mother/father of the child
Month of Interview: September 2021

1. Background of referral or contact with Prerana

One child from this family regularly attends Life Skill Education (LSE) sessions by Prerana organized in Ghansoli Community. The Prerana team follows up with the child and their family.

2. Forced Migration, Relocation Eviction

The respondent's parents had migrated to Mumbai from their native village in Solapur, district of Maharashtra because of a drought that had adversely affected the people living there. The respondent's parents along with the respondent's 5 older siblings migrated to Mumbai, in hope to survive.

The respondent herself was born on the streets in Churchgate, Mumbai and had spent her entire childhood and adulthood at Churchgate. The respondent shared that it was only the constant fear of evictions that made her leave her camp at Churchgate, Mumbai otherwise she would have never left the place. The brutal behavior of the authority during eviction has traumatized her. For those who live on the streets of Mumbai eviction is a routine affair. The respondent observed that over the years the severity of eviction and the violence innate to it became extreme.

One particularly devastating episode of eviction a year prior to relocating to Ghansoli an urbanizing village in Navi Mumbai and the torture by the police brought indescribable pain to them. She herself felt quite humiliated and violated several times during the entire process of "driving them out". She further added that they incur so much loss of all their belongings which they had collected with their hard-earned income.

The respondent and her family have been staying in Ghansoli since past one year.

The respondent narrated that before the lockdown, police officials had forced people staying on streets in Churchgate into a van and dropped them at unlisted places in Mumbra, Diva and Kalva (all in the Thane district of Maharashtra neighboring Mumbai).



Their identity proofs were forcibly taken away from them and destroyed by the police officials. For some, their clothes and identity proofs were burnt in front of their houses. The families were left with nothing other than the single pair of clothing on their body.

The respondent recalled how the Police officials had started the process of eviction at 2.30 am in the night. The respondent shared that during the whole incident, she was asked to provide her documents, when she refused to give them the same, she was brutally beaten by police officials. The police officials forcibly put 50 to 70 people into the vans. After this the officials would take petrol from their vehicles and burn people's documents or clothes.

The respondent shared that they begged the police officials to put them in jail than to leave them behind at an unknown place. There were children, old people with them, and she feared for their health and well-being. The respondent shared her plight that when she tried complaining against the officials who hit her, one of the officials responded to her saying that the police had immunity and no one could press charges against the police.

The respondent further stated that she along with her brother and sister-in-law were beaten up by police at a police station, which left her with swollen body and a broken finger. She said that although no case was filed against her, her brother or her sister-in-law she was brutally hit by police because during the eviction on that night she asked and insisted on the officials to return her the bags and their IDs.

She further reported that after the incident, her brother has refused to return to Mumbai. He prefers to stay at their native place in Solapur where there is stagnation and hopelessness but not a comparable level of violence.

The police officials would also not allow the respondent and her neighbors to go out for wage work. Once the police forcibly took INR 1000 worth raw material. When she went to the police station to claim her materials, she was told that all her material was thrown away and some were burnt.

During the 1st CiL, i.e., March 2020 the issue of evictions was not picked up by the police officials much. The families were allowed to stay on the footpath, but the police officials regularly checked and would make frequent rounds around the place where they lived in Churchgate. The police also provided them with Khichdi (cooked rice) during the lockdown at Churchgate, Mumbai.

The officials would not allow anyone to sell anything on the streets and at signal posts during the CiL. They would take the sale material like toys, bubble stick, which the respondent and her family had then they would throw it in the sea or put in a big basket at police station, by the time respondent would reach to collect her materials the basket would be empty with no one accountable to explain.

The respondent on asking reported that in the month of March or April 2021 she had been to her native place. It was her younger cousin's engagement. So, her entire family including her husband, her son and herself had gone to attend the engagement. They travelled by a private bus to their native place because they weren't permitted to get train tickets as none of them was fully vaccinated.

3. Multidimensional Impact of Covid Induced Lockdown (CiL)

The respondent shared that, during the lockdown in the first wave her son met with an accident and his one arm got fractured for which he needed to be taken to the hospital.

But because of the travel restrictions they could not get any vehicle. His father had to carry the child for half the way. In the mid-way a car stopped seeing them in that condition and took them to the hospital. The child was operated on the next day a rod needed to be inserted in his hand to stabilize and align the fracture. As mentioned by the respondent the child was discharged early from the hospital as there were COVID affected people. The child was also not taken care of properly. During that time the family did not earn well to pay the bills of the hospital. However, her husband's employer paid the bills of the hospital with the condition that he will repay the money to him as soon as he can arrange it. They had to pay INR 6000 to the hospital. An installment of INR 5000-6000/- is deducted from his salary every month to repay his loan.

The family also took loan earlier for buying a house. Repaying the loan during the pandemic got extremely difficult for them. They could only repay, once his employer started helping him in buying groceries, vegetables etc. during the lockdown.

There were some individuals who used to come to the community for donating cooked food during the pandemic, but the family did not take the food, because they did not prefer going into crowd during the pandemic, as they had a fear of catching COVID-19.

4. Situation of Children: Unlevelled field in obstacles race

The respondent has a 12 year old son who stays with her. Before 2019 he was enrolled in a Municipal school at Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Mumbai. Subsequently, sometime in 2020 he was enrolled in an Ashram school in Solapur. Currently, he attends regular online classes, where he studies for an hour a day. The teacher gives some homework that he has to work on and he submits it via WhatsApp.

The child uses the father's phone which the father keeps at home for the children to use for their online classes. The respondent said her husband has bought a new cheaper phone for carrying to work.

The respondent shared that she was concerned over her child's education. Before the CiL, due to the eviction, for a year her son couldn't attend the Municipal School near CST. During the eviction the police did not even spare the child's school books, bags, etc. and threw those away as well. After his enrollment in Ashram school, lockdown was imposed and he again couldn't attend the Ashram school as well. The respondent shared her concern that her son has not been in a proper school setting for 3 years and she is worried about his future. She doesn't want her son to have the same life on the streets like her and her husband.

5. Pandemic and Health: Awareness, Access, Impact

The respondent shared an incident of someone in their vicinity dying of COVID-19 during the 2nd CiL in April 2020. She was then staying at Ghansoli, Navi Mumbai. She shared that a man suffering from mental health problems tested positive to COVID-19 after which his wife isolated him in a room. The wife would open the door only to provide food or water to the man. The isolation took a toll on his health and he passed away. That is when the respondent saw an ambulance being called, few people wearing white PPE kits came to the house, before taking the body away. The dead man's body was wrapped in a blue plastic bag. This incident shook everyone in her neighborhood and her family as well.

There was yet another incident, in the month of September – October 2020 during which her husband was wrongly detected COVID-19 positive by the hospital where he worked.

His employer provided him with another round of test and the 2nd result was negative. The respondent shared that she felt miserable and had cried hearing that her husband tested COVID-19 positive. With the information about COVID-19 that she had been listening to on the Television and from her neighbors she thought she would lose her husband forever.

Currently, there is no health concerns in the family. The respondent and her husband are fully vaccinated. She further added that at her husband's place of work it was mandatory to get vaccinated. The respondent's employer arranged and paid for vaccination for all his employees through which the respondent and her husband got vaccinated from a private hospital at Vikhroli, Mumbai

6. Impact on Household Economy

The respondent's husband who had been working as driver prior to CiL earned a salary of Rs. 16,000/- per month. With the imposition of CiL his salary got reduced to Rs. 7,000/- p.m. However, the employer started paying him extra for monthly grocery. With all that his income had halved and that caused considerable distress to the family. The distress was compounded by a situation in which the respondent's husband had a fracture. Although she was not comfortable in sharing as to what caused him the fracture she mentioned that it was a traumatic incident where her husband had to walk several miles with their injured child. The family had to plead to a tourist car to drop the family at Government Hospital for treatment. The respondent was in tears while sharing her experiences related to the incident.

At the hospital the doctor suggested to operate the child on priority basis. The family had to pay Rs. 12,000/- for the operation. The respondent's husband asked for money from his employer, who immediately transferred around Rs. 50,000 for the surgery and follow up treatment of the child.

The money was a loan extended to the family and they were asked to repay as per their convenience. The respondent shared that her son was discharged from the hospital in 7 days. By the end of the treatment the respondent's husband had taken a loan of Rs. 80,000/- from his employer. The employer now deducted Rs. 5,000/- every month from his salary as a repayment of the loan. Since he has re-joined the work, her husband receives a salary of Rs. 11,000/- instead of Rs. 16,000/- every month

In order to repay the loan the respondent too started working. She made and sold Gajras, at the rate of Rs. 20/- to Rs. 30/- per dozen. For every dozen of Gajra she is paid Rs. 20/- to 30. She could easily knit 10 to 15 dozens Gajras a day and earn Rs. 200/- to Rs. 300/- per day. Her husband's salary is utilized to minimum. The family saves money to the maximum now that they know the importance of saving for the rainy day.

The family might go to village again for Navratri celebration. The respondent informed that recently (2021) for Ganapati festival the family went to Pune to sell flowers and garlands. The family was in Pune for 2 days, and earned around Rs. 1000/- to 2000/- each on both the days. They would sleep on the road and besides it they had set up a flower stall to sell garlands and flowers.

7. Proof of Existence: Identity Documents and Entitlement Documents

The respondents explained that because of constant eviction, she had lost all the identity documents of her family. However, she has recently submitted some photocopied documents that were saved, and on the basis of that she was able to get new identity proofs. These photocopied documents were made available through the respondent's husband's employer as well as from a hotel where the respondent had worked some years back,

and also from the Ashram School. However, the family is struggling to get ration card, as they don't have photocopies of the ration card.

The respondent has a savings account. The respondent did not recall the name of the Bank and she has no document showing the name.

All this work of retrieving the copies and procuring the originals was very costly in terms of wage days lost in visiting the various offices and the expenses on traveling.

8. Provisioning of Essentials: Material and Social

The respondent mentioned that it was impossible to survive through the CiL without the flow of charity and goodwill by several sources without expecting anything in return. She expressed her gratitude towards everyone who provided them with support during the lockdown.

The respondent shared that the dry ration provided from Prerana really helped them during the lockdown. In case of relief provided by other organizations, she shared that they would get Khichdi or cooked food from them. However, the respondent shared that she never got the relief provided by other organization because there was too much crowd and clamor to receive or grab it. When the community members gathered to get the Relief kits they did not use masks or follow safety protocols. The respondent did not want to risk her and the life of any of the family members in this situation and thus avoided going out when relief was provided to them.

The respondent shared that the relief kit that Prerana had provided was well thought out. After getting that kit she felt like having enough grocery for the entire month. It contained rice, flour, lentils, sugar, tea powder, spices like turmeric – chilli powder, oil, etc.

It helped the family to feel less stressful regarding the using up their savings for ration. The respondent shared that during the lockdown their meals were not so regular and it was only after her husband started to work in the month of August 2020 that the family has been again having 3 meals in a day.

9. Access to Basic Amenities: Bad to worse

The respondent uses a gas cylinder, which costs her around Rs. 480/- and lasts for 15 days.

Currently, where the respondent is staying, they don't have toilet blocks. The people from the neighborhood use open spaces for defecation so does the respondent's family.

The respondent has applied for Narendra Modi Awaaz Yojana at her village, to build a house. She has received Rs. 15,000/- in her bank account for the same. However, in order to avail the further installments, she has to first spend Rs. 30,000/- to build the foundation of the house, only then will she be reimbursed with the next instalment and would later receive the remaining instalments. Given the fact that they already have a loan on their head, she hasn't constructed the foundation of her house and therefore not received any further instalment under the scheme.

The family has 2 phones, one is with the respondent and another phone is with the respondent's husband.

10. Mental Health

The COVID-19 imposed lockdown caused distress among the family members. There were constant announcements that no one should leave the house and to maintain social distancing. The family didn't understand the situation very well and everything happened in a matter of few days.

The distress, the confusion, the uncertainties led to constant fight and arguments between her and her husband. Her husband was also under the stress of being in debt during the same time, so he had gotten more irritable.

The respondent and her husband had a habit of eating tobacco. During lockdown the prices of tobacco went up to Rs. 120/- per packet which prior to the pandemic cost them Rs. 10/-. So, instead of consuming entire packet of tobacco individually in a day, she and her husband shared a packet for over a period of 2-3 days. She confessed that neither of them was able to completely leave eating tobacco. They felt restless when they had no access to tobacco during 1st lockdown. Once they got access to tobacco, a small quantity of the same was enough for respondent and her husband, she shared.

The respondent explained that during the lockdown, there was a widespread sense of helplessness, fear and confusion. No one knew what was in store for them in the future. If the lockdown had continued longer, the respondent's family would have been left with nothing. The respondent recalled the confusion and fear & kept wondering whether everything would ever go back as it was like before.

The respondent added that constant increasing loan did affect her mental well-being. Both she and her husband were under stress of repaying the loan.

The respondent shared that her son did not approach her to share any concern with her on how he felt during the lockdown. The injury that he had during the lockdown caused him discomfort and distress. He also felt a sense of guilt, that his parents had to take a loan in such a difficult situation because of his injury.

The respondent shared that in terms of going out or playing with other children, her son doesn't listen to her instructions. During the first lockdown, he would wear masks, but would still loiter around on the streets or other places which the respondent had asked him not to do. Because of this, the respondent shared, she was worried and anxious thinking her son might catch the virus while playing outdoors.



Case Study 3

Unstructured interview & qualitative data collection: Ms. Deepali Mistry

Name of the respondent: Male, 45 Years, Father of the child

Month of Interview: September 2021

1. Background of referral or contact with Prerana

Two children from this family regularly attend LSE and Leadership Sessions of Prerana organized in Ghansoli Community. The Prerana team has worked with this family since 2020 and follows up with the child up to date.

2. Forced Migration, Relocation Eviction

The respondent shared that although he owns a house at Ghansoli, Navi Mumbai since the past 2 years, he stays most of the time on the side of a flyover (connecting Navi Mumbai – Mumbai) in Airoli, Navi Mumbai. The respondent and his family spend their weekdays at Airoli and during the weekends they are at Ghansoli. At Ghansoli, the family stays at Ekveera transport area. The house is built on a ground for which they have received oral permission in the year 2016-17 from the then local corporator. The house has no legal status and thus they have no legal documents to prove their ownership.

The respondent shared that his family comprises of his wife, 2 sons and his mother. Three years ago, he shifted to Ghansoli from a slum in Airoli and built his own house. It has also been 2 years since his family began to camp (an open area without any kind of shade or shelter) by the side of a flyover at Airoli, Navi Mumbai as well. When the first CiL was imposed in March 2020, he and his family were visiting their native place in Osmanabad, Maharashtra. The family did not have any source of income in their native place and thus they started selling home-made Mahua liquor.

The family would earn around Rs. 400/- to Rs. 500/- per day. However, after a month the police found about their business and forced them to shut down. The respondent and his wife were arrested and were put behind bars for a day and then “released”. The respondent is not aware as to what charges have been levelled against them.

With the illicit alcohol business shut, the respondents had no other source of income and had to take a loan from private money lenders at an interest rate of 20% p.m. to meet expenses towards food, hygiene and other essentials.



During the 2nd CiL in April 2021, the family stayed in Airoli, Navi Mumbai, but faced frequent evictions by police officials. The police would confiscate their belongings and force them to leave the place. The respondent also expressed his gratitude towards a few police officials who allowed the family to collect their belongings, find a shelter nearby for a couple of hours till the situation stabilizes, and then return. The respondent shared that he thinks it might have been the locals who had complained about them to the police for encroaching or causing nuisance. This was mostly because they were worried about hygiene since garbage was thrown after cooking by the community members a few meters away from where they stayed.

However, there were several other such instances, where their belongings like stoves, clothes, utensils, medicines, identity documents were taken away by the police officials and never returned during the 2nd CiL in April 2020. The respondent also shared an incident where his mother's blood pressure medicines were taken by the police. The respondent then had to visit the police station a couple of times to get those medicines back, as they were expensive and he could not afford to buy new ones.

After the evictions that happened during the 2nd Lockdown (April – June 21), the family was left with few resources to manage their daily needs. The children would sell things at a traffic signal at Airoli, Navi Mumbai and parents would work as daily labourers at a construction site. The work wasn't stable and they would only get work for 10 to 12 days in a month. The family together earned around Rs. 200/- to Rs. 300/- per day.

3. Multidimensional Impact of Covid Induced Lockdown (CiL)

The respondent lamented that no one from their extended family came forward to help even in such desperate times. He feels helpless even now as he has nowhere to go. He cannot return to his village, as he has no money to repay the loan, which he had taken from money lender in his village. He doesn't want to stay in the city, as the job opportunities are drastically reduced. He is completely clueless as to what he should do next. The first and the second CiLs have caused considerable stress to the family

The respondent's wife too is in conflict. She is keen that her older son is focused on his studies, but the debt compels them to send him to work to earn.

Before the CiL the family members, especially the adults never begged, now after the CiL they are left with no other option but to beg to survive. (This family has come in contact with the Sanman Project team after the 1st CiL). The financial crisis has hit them very badly and they are unsure about their next meal.

4. Situation of Children: Unlevelled field in obstacles race

The respondent has two sons, 14 and 12 year old who are enrolled in an Ashram school (the respondent doesn't remember the name of the school), in Osmanabad district of Maharashtra state.

During the first CiL in March 2020 the schools were shut down and students were sent away. Since then both the children have been residing with the respondent. As the survival needs are far too more demanding the children do not attend a single online class. Online education arrangement prerequisites smart phone broadband and talk time/data.

They instead go out with the respondent to help in selling things like pens, pencils, toys like cars, etc, and also occasionally resort to begging. They along with their grandmother sell near a traffic signal at Airoli, Navi Mumbai (a cross road junction), and they together earn around Rs. 100/- to Rs. 200/- a day.

On enquiring about ration supplied from ashram schools, the respondents reported that they did not receive any food grains from Ashram school. During the 1st CiL of March 2020 the family had no means to travel, as their native place is almost 20-30 kms away from the Ashram school. After the lockdown was lifted, the family returned to Mumbai. The respondent and his wife have been in touch with the school authorities via telephone.

The respondent shared concern over the shutting down of the school having adversely affected their children's education. He was worried that his children, especially the older child might not return to schooling as it has been over a year that he has attended school. The respondent hopes that his children have a decent life without worrying for where their next meal comes and have a stable shelter and not have to live under threats of eviction all the time.

The respondent shared that he bought a smartphone for his older son to study even when he could not afford it. However, to his dismay, his older son constantly uses their smartphone to play online games instead of studying. He then added that neither he nor his wife can supervise their son's use of the phone, as both of them are working outdoors.

The respondent shared that whenever children are outside the house to play they wear masks because they fear they would be fined by the police otherwise.

5. Pandemic and Health: Awareness, Access, Impact

The respondent initially denied the knowledge of any cases of COVID-19 in their neighborhood. However later while interacting they shared that at Airoli, Navi Mumbai they had seen people dying of COVID-19.

The respondent and his wife found out about COVID-19, from the news on the Television or heard from people around them. The respondent shared that his family knows about precautions that need to be taken (they learned from television, phone announcements, and from the police) but shared that he would not follow these precautions because Goddess Karuna will protect them. He shared that he did not mind leaving their life in the hands of Goddess Karuna.

The respondent's wife claimed that she did not care nor was she worried about COVID-19 affecting her or her family. She shared that she believes in hard work and good deeds, if she did good in her life, Goddess Karuna will protect her and her family from COVID-19. As long as she has the blessing of Goddess Karuna, no entity or virus can come near her family. The family's sole devotion to Goddess Karuna has led the family to refuse the use of mask. The family wears masks, only to avoid paying the fine mandated by State.

The respondent said that his family also doesn't believe in vaccination, as Goddess Karuna will protect them from the harm. The family had a firm belief that being vaccinated equates to offending Goddess Karuna. The respondent and his wife believed that vaccination would make no difference to them.

6. Impact on Household Economy

The respondent informed that during the first CiL of March 2020, the family had borrowed

Rs 8000 from a moneylender at an interest of 20% p.m. when they were at their native place in Osmanabad, Maharashtra. This was because the alcohol business which the family was running was shut down by the police and they had no other source of income.

However, with the current financial status he can't repay his debts or pay the monthly instalments. He works as a daily wage worker, where he gets work once in 3-4 days, where he earns Rs. 400/- to Rs. 500/- a day. The amount earned by his sons hardly suffices for food for their family. His wife had a job as a security guard in the company where she earned Rs. 12,000/- per month, but was fired from work after getting into an argument with the authorities. The respondent said that the family is left with no choice but to resort to begging or depend on food given by individual donors. Currently the respondents' wife occasionally begs along with his younger son near traffic signals at Airoli, Navi Mumbai. The respondent added after the first lockdown was lifted he had rebuilt from scratch, when the family returned to Mumbai, Maharashtra. He shared that his house was robbed by thieves at Ghansoli, Navi Mumbai and utensils, metals, jewelry were stolen by them. His wife had stored her gold chain in a bamboo used in the construction of the house, which was stolen as well.

7. Proof of Existence: Identity Documents and Entitlement Documents

The respondent shared that he has the birth certificate of both of his sons and the Aadhaar card of every member of the family. However, he has safely kept the documents at his native place, Osmanabad, Maharashtra because of the constant fear of losing them during the frequent evictions.

The respondent's wife said that she has a Jan Dhan Yojana account in Jan Kalyan bank but she did not receive any monetary benefit in it.

During the 1st lockdown of March 2020, people who had opened bank account under Jan Dhan Yojana received Rs. 500/- for 3 months deposited in their bank account. The family has a ration card on the address of the native place. Neither the respondent nor his wife has a PAN card.

8. Provisioning of Essentials: Material and Social

The respondent shared that during the 1st CiL of March 2020 as the entire family was at the native place they couldn't avail or receive any benefits or provisions given by State or the individual donors who donated food grains in the community. As per the respondent the family did not receive ration then announced by the State.

When they returned to Navi Mumbai, they received food grains from a few organizations. At Airoli people staying in the neighborhood gave them leftover food or they would beg for food near restaurants. In the days they would get work, they would buy food, or else they would beg.

9. Access to Basic Amenities: Bad to worse

At Airoli the family use stove (kerosene) for cooking and at Ghansoli a Chulha (hearth with wood fuel). They buy kerosene from ration shops under the PDS at the rate of Rs. 80/- to Rs. 90/- per litre. The family hasn't received any benefits under any Government scheme as they neither have/had applied to nor knew about such beneficial scheme. The respondent informed that he and his family pay Rs. 10/- for bath and Rs. 5/- for latrine at a nearby public toilet in Airoli while they urinate in open. The family spends around Rs. 80/- to Rs. 100/- a day for using the public toilets. They get water to drink free of cost from a nearby restaurant or tap water from a nearby public ground as it is an open ground, with no security guard appointed.

10. Mental Health

The respondent shared that all the family members were under stress caused due to the uncertainties, not being able to go for earning, having no savings to fall back upon during the 1st lockdown. This would then lead to arguments and fights between the respondent and his wife. There were days when they feared the entire family will have to go without any food.

The respondent wife shared that her husband began drinking after the first lockdown. He would be under the influence of alcohol through the day and night and would not do anything apart from lying down in a place all day in the house. He was recently hospitalized in September 2021 for few days, due to his increased alcohol intake. He was admitted in NMMC run hospital Rajamata Jijau Municipal Hospital, Airoli. He stayed there for a week. Most of the expenses were free of cost, but they had to pay for some blood examination and medicines. The expenses were paid by respondent's wife's elder sister. The elder sister knows the financial disposition of the family and won't bother them with repaying the amount spent on examinations and medicines. Since his discharge from the hospital the respondent has stopped drinking. The stress of the debt had pushed him into drinking.

The respondent's wife shared that she is facing domestic violence now. The respondent and his wife would quarrel very often after being intoxicated with alcohol and then he would physically assault his wife and use abusive language towards her and their children. The respondent's wife also shared that when the respondent is sober, he has not hit her even once.

The respondent shared that the children have not shared anything with the parents about how they felt during both the lockdown neither did they discuss the same with their children.



Case Study 4

Unstructured interview & qualitative data collection: Ms. Richa Pant

Respondent: Male, 38 Years, Father of the Child

Month of Interview: June 2021

1. Background of referral or contact with Prerana

A child from this family was referred to Prerana in July 2017 by Mumbai Suburban CWC 1. The child had been rescued from begging by the R.C.F police in Chembur. After the rescue, Prerana was asked to submit a SIR to the CWC. The child was restored to the family in August 2017 and an undertaking was signed by his father for enrolling the child in a school once she was restored to the family. In September 2017 the child was enrolled in a Municipal school. Prerana's team has been supporting the child and the family, working for family strengthening and following up with the child and her family every month since then.

2. Forced Migration, Relocation Eviction

The family of the respondent belongs to Kalamb taluka of Osmanabad district in the state of Maharashtra. The respondent's parents had after their marriage moved out of the village and settled in Mumbai for better work opportunities and out of the stagnant local economy. The respondent was born in Mumbai. Earlier, the respondent along with his family used to live in a hutment (slum) in Mahim (a suburb of Mumbai) and some 13 to 14 years ago they were given alternate accommodation at MHADA Colony in Vashi Naka area of Chembur, Mumbai. As this is their own home, they did not experience fears related to eviction during the CiL. The family has visited their native place only once after the Unlock. The respondent shared that they do not have any source of income in their village hence, they only visit there to meet their relatives or for celebrating festivals. Though the family has their own room in the village, they do not have furniture, bedding, cooking equipment etc. They have to live with their relatives whenever they go to their village. The respondent further mentioned that since he is working, he does not get frequent leave from work during the year hence he takes leave for one entire month every year to go to the village. There are no plans of visiting the native village anytime soon shared the respondent.

3. Multidimensional Impact of Covid Induced Lockdown (CiL)

The respondent shared that though the family was facing a lot of issues especially financially, he did not ask for help from any relative or other members. He mentioned that the family tried to manage everything with each other's support. The household expenses were managed from the family's savings and through the money that they had received by pawning off gold ornaments of the family members.

The respondent shared that he has two or three relatives staying in the same neighborhood and if some difficult situations, which are beyond their family's control, come up or in case of any medical emergencies, those relatives are always there to support the respondent and his family. The respondent strongly opined against lockdown as he and his family have suffered enormous hardship due to the lockdown. He, his wife and sons could not go out for work and hence, their earning got badly hit. It became difficult for the family to meet the household expenses. Limited public transport facilities would get them late to work. Moreover, monsoon made it even more difficult to travel to work.

The respondent stated that though the family had to face a lot of hardships because of the lockdown, he valued the time when everyone used to be at home together.

When the government had imposed restrictions during the pandemic the respondent was worried as he feared how the family would sustain without any earnings. There was fear of loss of work and the uncertainties that followed especially after the first lockdown. The respondent also shared that he was worried as the market was closed and his wife's and son's work got completely closed as they had to procure flowers, which was not possible and

even if they managed to get flowers they could not sell as during the lockdown there were no buyers.

4. Situation of Children: Unlevelled field in obstacles race

The respondent has 5 children, 2 sons and 3 daughters, all of whom stay with the family at Vashi Naka. The elder son is 21 years old and one younger to him is 19 years old. They both have studied till class 8th and dropped out of school due to financial constraints of the family. Now, both the sons go out for work with their mother. One daughter is 15 years old, while the others are 12 and 6 years respectively. The elder girls are enrolled in a local Municipal corporation school at Ayodhya Nagar, Chembur in 4th and 8th standards respectively. The respondent's youngest daughter is 6 years old and has not been enrolled in a school yet. Before the pandemic as mentioned by the respondent, the respondent's daughters were regular to the school and their mother used to drop them to school every day. The school is shut down since March 2020 due to the CiL. Since then, they have been receiving their study material from the school through WhatsApp. But in April 2021, the smartphone that the family had, went out of order, because of which the children were not able to study online. The respondent was worried as he was keen on his children getting educated. When they were receiving their study material from the school, they also used to attend additional coaching classes in the neighbourhood. A neighbour used to run these classes free of charge. The respondent stated that they were looking for additional coaching classes for their children as the classes conducted by their neighbour too got shut down.

The respondent informed that the children go out to play with their friends in the neighbourhood but not far away from the

house. The children do not wear a mask while playing outdoors. He mentioned that in general the people around them do not wear mask in the community. They do so when they go out for work. No other Covid protocol like hand hygiene, social distancing etc., is followed by the community people. Moreover, the children or others do not follow general hygiene like washing hands with soap when they come back home after playing nor do they change their clothes.

5. Pandemic and Health: Awareness, Access, Impact

The respondent shared that there have been no positive cases of COVID-19 in their neighbourhood since March 2020 and hence, no deaths due to COVID-19 were reported in their area.

The members in the family have sometimes fallen ill with mild viral flu (cold or mild fever) and recovered in a couple of days but no one had any symptoms of COVID-19. The respondent further mentioned that generally even prior to the pandemic people would fall sick due to changes in weather. They would however recover within a couple of days. The respondent informed that they consult a doctor in a nearby private clinic. The nearest government health centre is in Ayodhya Nagar, Chembur which is a bit far from the community and crowded, hence they avoid availing the services there.

Since the lockdown was imposed in March 2020, the respondent could not go to work and the family faced serious financial crisis. The respondent was receiving Rs. 100/- per month from his employer even when he was not going out to work. The family survived on their savings as there was no other source of income during the first lockdown.

The respondent mentioned that he believes that if the health is okay, wealth can still be managed somehow and that is why he was not looking out for any other job. He started to go out for work around July or August 2020 when there were some relaxations in the lockdown. He mentioned that he always wears a mask when he goes out for work.

The respondent shared that no one in the family has gotten themselves vaccinated for COVID-19. He further shared that he does not want to get vaccinated because he thinks that if there is no health issue then there is no need to take any medicine or to get vaccinated. He feels he is healthy now, once he gets vaccinated, he might fall ill and thereby, his work will also get affected. He further shared that no one in the family is willing to get vaccinated as they fear falling sick. They have heard people in the neighbourhood talk about side-effects of the vaccination. No one has spread awareness about COVID-19 in their community. All the information that the respondent has received is through the interaction with different people at his workplace. The respondent mentioned that according to his understanding only people who are above 50 years of age require to get vaccinated. The respondent also shared that the family got information about the current COVID-19 crisis from the news on television and from people in the neighbourhood. They also came to know from these sources about the lockdown that was being imposed.

6. Impact on Household Economy

The respondent mentioned that there are 4 earning members in the family, he himself, his wife and two sons. The respondent works for a builder. since August 2020 he has been going out for work almost every day. The respondent's wife and both the sons go out to sell flowers and balloons at Dadar, Mumbai.

They buy flowers from Dadar flower market and sell it at Dadar itself or during festivals make Gajras, Malas (Garlands) at home and sell. During the CiL they sometimes used to travel with other families in taxi or auto due to the non-availability of public transport. They weren't allowed to travel in the local train as it was available only for the essential category of people. Sometimes they would travel without buying a valid ticket as taxi fares and auto fares are expensive in comparison to cost towards public transport.

The sale of these items is good during the festival season as there is high demand of flowers during that time. When there are festivals, everyone in the family assists in making Gajras, Malas (Garlands) etc. and all of them work together. The respondent shared that the previous year (2020), during festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi, Navratri, Dusshera, there was good sale of flowers.

As per the respondent the income was sufficient to meet the basic expenses for survival but not enough for other needs like additional amenities for the house or for emergency expenses. Moreover, the family's earning has been adversely affected by the 1st CiL. They are earning lesser due to restrictions on physical mobility and transport.

During the 1st CiL of March 2020, as the family members were not going out for work, the respondent shared that they had to pawn their gold ornaments for money. The respondent shared that he does not like borrowing money and hence, tried to take money by pawning gold. He now tries to pay off the debt with the family's earning whenever possible. He earns around Rs. 400/- to Rs. 500/- per day, during the lockdown.

7. Proof of Existence: Identity Documents and Entitlement Documents

The respondent shared that everyone in the family has an Aadhar Card which they use as the proof of identity. The family also has an orange ration card. All the documents are with the family at their house in Vashi Naka, Chembur.

The respondent has a joint bank account and it is not a Jan Dhan account. He had to open a bank account when the family was evicted from Mahim and as resettlement was allotted a tenement at MHADA colony in Vashi Naka, Chembur.

8. Provisioning of Essentials: Material and Social

The respondent has a ration card (of Vashi Naka) and received ration during last year through the Public Distribution System (PDS). From the last 4 months, due to some technical glitch in fingerprint identification, the family is not receiving ration through the PDS. Hence, they have to buy food grain from the nearby shop at a higher price. They have sufficient food grains for the current month. The respondent also shared that the ration that they used to receive through PDS earlier was not sufficient for the entire family and hence, they had to supplement it by buying it from open market. The respondent further shared that there has been no change in the family's food habits and they are taking their usual meals as they did before the pandemic.

The two elder daughters who are enrolled in a Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) school have received food grains from the school. The respondents also informed that they had received ration through some CSOs during the last year's lockdown. During the first lockdown, they had received ration in October from Prerana.

During the second lockdown in June Prerana had again provided ration to the family.

9. Access to Basic Amenities: Bad to worse

The family uses LPG gas for cooking and was able to procure it throughout both the lockdowns. They purchase a 14 kg cylinder from a private source (HP Gas) which is sufficient for 20 to 25 days and pay around Rs. 800/- per cylinder.

The respondent shared that they have a toilet (latrine cum bathroom) in the house and hence, they did not have to worry about spending money at the public toilet or defecate in the open during the 1st CiL. Moreover, they had two phones in the family, one with him and the other one with his wife. His wife had a smartphone which the children used for attending their online classes but it is out of order because of which her studies have been affected.

10. Mental Health

The respondent shared that he felt anxious staying in the house for several days due to the CiL. He mentioned that he had never seen such a situation in his lifetime and hence, it was difficult for him to adjust to this new situation. The family members including the respondent were in distress because there was uncertainty about their life and future. The respondent used to feel sad and helpless as there was no work and he could not even go out to search for one. There were strict restrictions in their locality and all the roads were blocked by the police. Hence, the family was at home for a long period. Gradually, with the relaxations in the lockdown, the respondent started feeling better as he could go out for work.

The respondent shared that the family members sometimes had some arguments especially related to finances.

He also mentioned that only small verbal fights happened and he said these are normal occurrences within the family as it generally happens when everyone stays together. The respondent further shared that there were no major incidences of fights /arguments and absolutely no incidence of physical violence among the family members.

As per the respondent, the children often have fights with other children in their neighbourhood while playing. This also has sometimes led to the fights among the elder members of their family. Sometimes, the people in the neighbourhood have also objected to the respondent taking his children out for playing during the initial 2-3 months of the first CiL. The children used to feel restless staying at home and hence, the respondent mentioned that they asked the children to not go to someone's house but could play in the passage on the different floors of their own building.

The respondent and his wife suffer from substance abuse disorder and use gutkha (a term to refer to chewing tobacco) since they were young but there has been no surge in using any substance specifically due to the lockdown.

The respondent shared that the children never expressed the feelings of anger or sadness during the lockdown (both the waves), though they were bored staying at home for so long.

Case Study 5

Unstructured interview & qualitative data collection: Ms. Richa Pant

Respondent: Female, 48 Years, Paternal Aunt of the Child

Month of Interview: June 2021

1. Background of referral or contact with Prerana

A child from this family was referred to Prerana in March 2017 by CWC Mumbai Suburban 1. The child was rescued from begging by the Chembur Police Station. After the rescue, Prerana was asked to submit an SIR to the CWC. The child was restored to her aunt in June 2017 and since then Prerana's team has been following up with the child and her family every month. The child's parents passed away due to ill health when the child was 3 or 4 years old and the paternal aunt is the respondent of this research.

2. Forced Migration, Relocation Eviction

The respondent shared that the family belongs to Kakal village of Mangaon taluka in Raigad district, Maharashtra. The respondent along with her parents had migrated from their native place to Govandi, Mumbai around 30 years ago for better work opportunities. The respondent's family migrated after some of their relatives had already moved to Mumbai before them.

The family lives in a rented house in Govandi. During the CiL, the respondent seemed relieved that they were neither evicted nor received any eviction threats.

The respondent said she had not visited their village since the lockdown and had no plans of doing so anytime soon.

3. Multidimensional Impact of Covid Induced Lockdown (CiL)

Earlier the respondent had to go out to work (such as taking the cow to the temple) on a daily basis as that was her livelihood. The routine and hence the income got seriously affected due to the CiL. On her request her brother provided her a financial assistance of Rs. 1000/- once last year through bank transfer.

She reported that her elder daughter was her support system and she contacts her daughter during difficult times be it financial or emotional. The respondent said that they had no one to whom the family could resort to in emergency.



The respondent disclosed that the landlord of the house too was unsupportive and noncooperative. The respondent had to pay Rs. 8000/- as one-time payment to get a water connection in the house for the family's usage. During the CiL as their earning shrank the family faced crises issues in paying the room rent.

The respondent mentioned that she was stressed when the government had imposed restrictions on mobility during the pandemic as she had no source of income and was worried how the family would survive. The respondent suggested that the government should not impose lockdown in this manner as families like hers have to go through a lot of difficulties such as sudden closer of income with complete uncertainty as to when would things come back on track, no food reserves, added expenses, inability to access any support system. The respondent said, government should know that restrictions on movement means restrictions on earnings and survival crisis.

4. Situation of Children: Unlevelled field in obstacles race

The respondent has 2 daughters. The elder aged 25 years has been married since the last 5 years and stays in a neighbouring city Panvel in Raigad district. The younger daughter is 11 years old, stays with the respondent at Govandi. The respondent's niece who is 17 years old, has been raised in Mumbai. The child and her elder brother used to stay with their cousin (the respondent's daughter) in Panvel earlier. But now the child is currently living in Govandi with her aunt while her elder brother continues to stay in Panvel with their cousin. The respondent shared that everyone in the family stays in contact over telephonic calls with each other.

The respondent's younger daughter is enrolled in 5th standard in a Municipal school in Govandi.

The school is closed since the announcement of the first CiL of March 2020. The child was attending her online classes regularly till April 2021 but from May 2021, the smartphone is not functioning properly because of which she is sometimes unable to attend the online classes and as a result, her studies are adversely affected.

The respondent's niece has studied till the 6th standard and dropped out of school 6 years ago due to financial crunch in the family. The respondent's younger daughter and her niece, both stay at home the whole day and do not go out for playing. That was also prior to the CiL.

The respondent shared that she does not feel safe in allowing the girl children to go out to play. The respondent shared that she takes both the children with her to work and does not leave them alone at the home. She further added that the children like to watch cartoons and shows on the television when they are at home.

The respondent reported that they follow the COVID-19 protocols like, hand hygiene, physical distancing and whenever the respondent or the children go out, they wear a mask and carry a sanitizer with them to avoid the spread of the virus. They wash their clothes frequently and also take a bath when they come back home from outside.

5. Pandemic and Health: Awareness, Access, Impact

The respondent reported that there have not been any cases of COVID-19 in their neighbourhood since March 2020 and no deaths due to Covid either. They said that during the pandemic none of the family members had any health problems. When she herself fell sick with body pain or pain in the leg she did not consult any doctor.

According to her such ache or pain in body is normal for everyone and it is easy to get well. The respondent shared that she did not think these were symptoms of COVID.

The respondent further mentioned that as the family mostly stayed at home during the lockdown, she is not much aware about the effect of the lockdown on the worklife of the people in the neighbourhood.

The respondent reported that she has not got vaccinated for COVID-19. In her neighbourhood she has heard people mention about incidents where people have died or had paralysis after taking the vaccine shots, she wants to get herself vaccinated. She mentioned that she is a bit scared of getting vaccinated as she is the only earning member of the family and she is also suffering from Hypertension, if something were to happen to her after the vaccination, there was no one to look after the family. Moreover, she shared that she has only heard about the COVID-19 vaccination in the news she is not much aware about the procedure of getting the vaccination or the hospitals where the doses are being provided.

If any health issues arise, the family consults a private doctor in the neighbourhood. The respondent further mentioned that she does not feel comfortable going to a government hospital as once when she had gone to the government hospital for getting a check-up done for chest pain, she was not attended well by the doctor. Hence, she does not trust in consulting a doctor at Government hospital.

6. Impact on Household Economy

The respondent is the only earning member in the family. She takes a cow to the temple in Chembur, Mumbai and carries the feed for her cow.

The devotees coming to the temple buy the feed from her to feed the cow which is considered as an act of great value.

She earns and she also gets alms in the form of food and cash at the temple. This is her only source of income for the family. The respondent shared that sometimes these alms are sufficient to manage the household expenses but on some other days, it gets difficult. When the temples were closed due to the lockdown, the respondent was not able to take the cow to the temple and hence, there was no earning for the family. The respondent reported that her family pulled on using up her savings.

The respondent mentioned that as the family has been facing financial issues since the CiL of March 2020, they have been unable to pay their house rent and are getting increasingly indebted. As the owner was unhappy with the situation of her rent, the respondent tried to clear her debt of majority of the months. As her younger daughter who was a victim of sex offence received victim assistance of Rs. 3,00,000/- she could pay up the pending rent and clear the debt.

7. Proof of Existence: Identity Documents and Entitlement Documents

The respondent possesses an Aadhar Card as the identity proof. The address in her Aadhar card is of her current place of residence, i.e., Govandi. She further shared that her younger daughter has an Aadhar Card as an identity proof but her niece does not have any identity document whatsoever. The respondent's family does not have a ration card.

The respondent has a bank account in Bank of Maharashtra opened under the Jan Dhan Yojana. She had received a total amount of Rs. 1500/- at the rate of Rs. 500/- per month for three months

from April'20 to June'20, under the government of India's Jan Dhan Scheme during the lockdown.

The respondent does not have any other identity documents like PAN Card, Voter's Card etc.

8. Provisioning of Essentials: Material and Social

As the family does not have a ration card, they could not avail the ration through Public Distribution System. During the 1st CiL of March 2020 the respondent heard someone in the neighborhood mention that the families who do not have a ration card can receive ration showing their Aadhar card. When the respondent went to the nearest ration shop for the same, they said there was no such provision of receiving ration on the Aadhar card. After this, the respondent contacted an official from the Rationing Office to request if some assistance can be provided to her family as her earning has been affected due to the COVID-19 induced lockdown and the family does not have sufficient ration. The officer in his individual capacity gave the respondent Rs. 1000/- for buying food grains.

The family has received packets of food grains and other essentials from Prerana twice during the first lockdown, the last being in October'20. The respondent also added that the 3rd time the family received assistance from Prerana was during the 2nd CiL in June 2021

The respondent mentioned that some other CSOs and the local Municipal Corporator had in their area distributed food during the 1st CiL. As the respondent's house is located deep inside the community and quite inaccessible to the people, they did not receive any such assistance. The respondent also shared that she had received ration assistance (5 kg rice, 5 kg wheat flour, 5 kg dal) once, during the first lockdown, from one of the local shopkeepers where she is a regular customer.

Post the CiL, whenever she goes out for work, taking the cow to the temple, she receives alms and money for the feed. People who visit the temple buy from her the feed as well as pay her in kind. She sometimes receives money, pulses, rice or other food items on which the household expenses and requirements are managed. The respondent reported that she had enough dry ration to last for a month.

There has been no change in the food habits of the family. The respondent shared that they always used to have 2 meals in a day and were able to manage the same during the lockdown. Though the respondent has started going to work now, she shared that she still feels the family requires ration assistance as her current earning is meagre and very irregular.

9. Access to Basic Amenities: Bad to worse

The respondent shared that the family has a cooking gas and the fuel used is LPG. They procure it from a private source (Bharat Gas) and pay Rs. 1000/- per month. They purchase a 14 kg cylinder which lasts for one and a half months. As her landlord for some unknown reasons refuses to sign up a lease agreement with her as a result she cannot file her application for a cooking gas connection.

There is an open Mori in the house as shared by the respondent. The family uses the public toilet in the neighbourhood free of cost. The family owns a television, refrigerator, cooler and two mobile phones. One of the mobile phones is a smartphone on which the respondent's younger daughter attends her online classes.

10. Mental Health

The respondent shared that she was in distress due to the lockdown imposed during the first wave as the family had to be confined to the house for many months with no source of earning.

She was also scared of contracting the coronavirus infection. The family used to get anxious after watching the news of COVID-19 related deaths during both the waves. During the first CiL the respondent realised that apart from her family members she had no one to bank upon for support. She felt intensely lonely and helpless.

She was sad and anxious as she could not meet her elder daughter who lived in Panvel (Raigad district), for months during the lockdown due to restrictions on travelling. The respondent shared that she was also troubled with her landlord's behaviour who would harass her a lot as she was unable to pay the house rent. She felt helpless during the first lockdown due to the uncertainties, not knowing when the lockdown would be lifted. She would worry thinking as to when would she be able to go to the temple and start earning and manage the basic household expenses.

The respondent further shared of being worried about her younger daughter and her niece's future. She shared that there was no one to take care of the children if something was to happen to the respondent. She would shudder with the idea that she would leave her children without any support/caretaker in case she dies. Her nephew staying in Panvel is alcohol dependent and is not keeping well from past 2 to 3 years.

The respondent suffers from substance abuse disorder and uses gutkha (tobacco chewing) since young age however there has been no surge in using any substance use specifically due to the lockdown. The respondent also mentioned that she does not get involved in fights or arguments with others. The respondent shared that despite the inadequacies experienced by her and the family during the lockdown no one displayed anger or violent behaviour. They were sad, worried, anxious and bored but never behaved violently.



Case Study 6

Unstructured interview & qualitative data collection: Ms. Richa Pant

Respondent: Female, 34 Years, Mother of the child

Month of Interview: August 2021

1. Background of referral or contact with Prerana

A child rescued from begging by Matunga police was referred by Mumbai Suburban 1 CWC to Prerana in January 2017. Prerana was assigned to submit an SIR to the CWC. In the same month the child was restored to her parents and since then Prerana has been following up with the child and her family on monthly basis. Later in February 2021 as the mother expressed her inability to take care of the child due to financial constraints the child was placed in a Child Care Institution (CCI).

2. Forced Migration, Relocation Eviction

The respondent along with her family is living in a hamlet on the street in Sion a suburb of Mumbai. She shared that they have been living in the current locality for the past 20 years. Before that, she used to stay in a nearby slum, which was around 1 km away from the current place. She was born and brought up in Sion. Her parents passed away when she was very young (3 months) and since then, she stayed with her grandmother who raised her. The respondent is not aware about her native place as she has always stayed in Sion. She was married to a person from the neighbourhood and hence, after her marriage she continued staying in the same locality. The respondent has three children of which one is placed in a CCI. Her husband died of Tuberculosis in the year 2019. The respondent stays with her two children.

The respondent mentioned that family has often faced eviction by the officials from Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC). The BMC officials used to come in every 15 to 20 days for evicting the slum except during the four months of monsoon. They would disassemble their house and store the material in a nearby building when they would get advance hint about an eviction drive by the BMC or would actually see the eviction van coming. Once the BMC officials would leave after eviction, they would again set up their house.



This wasn't easy as they could not sit at home only to guard their house or belonging. And reconstruction could only be at the cost of a couple of wage days.

She reported that there has been no eviction in their area since the imposition of the 1st CiL of March 2020. With her children she went to her aunt's house in Byculla, Mumbai where she stayed from June 2020 to October 2020.

3. Multidimensional Impact of Covid Induced Lockdown (CiL)

The respondent shared that the family was facing financial difficulties during the first CiL. She had no one in her neighborhood to seek support from and hence, with her children, she went to her aunt's house in Byculla a part of the main city of Mumbai. She stayed there for about 5 months from June 2020 to October 2020.

The respondent was worried about the situation as the first lockdown was imposed suddenly without any prior notice. She was not able to understand what was happening around and calmed herself down by thinking that everyone in the country is going through the same situation.

The respondent further shared that during the 1st CiL household expenses were managed from the family's savings. During the 2nd CiL of April 2021, the family did not face any financial difficulty as she was able to go out for work. Moreover, the second lockdown was imposed gradually which gave some time to everyone to prepare for the same.

4. Situation of Children: Unlevelled field in obstacles race

The respondent shared that she has 3 children, 2 girls and a boy. The eldest child is a 17 years old girl. Next to her is an 8 years old boy and the youngest of all is a 6 years old girl child. The eldest girl child stays in a CCI and the

younger two children stay at their home with the respondent.

The respondent shared that her child was placed in the CCI in February 2021 post the first CiL. The respondent is in contact with the child and talks with her once in a week or once in 15 days over a phone. They are allowed to talk to the child only on Sundays. Personal visits to the CCI were not allowed since the second CiL of April 2021. On the occasion of Raksha Bandhan (Hindu festival celebrating brother sister relationship) the respondent and her two younger children were allowed to visit the child for the first time since her placement at the CCI in August 2021.

The respondent further shared that whenever she talks to the child over a telephone call, she enquires about their health and well-being. The daughter who is 17 years old, is not formally enrolled in a school but she attends the online classes with the older children of the CCI.

The younger two children, both boy and girl child, are not enrolled in any school.

The respondent is worried about the education of the boy child as according to her, he is very mischievous and gets involved in fights with other children. She wants to place the child in a CCI or some residential school. For the education of the youngest girl child, the respondent wants to enrol her in a nearby school.

Both the children who stay at home, go out to play in the nearby garden. They also play with other children in the neighbourhood. They do not wear masks when they go out to play but take a bath on returning home. Other than taking bath, no safety precautions are being followed by her children as they spend majority of the day playing outside.

5. Pandemic and Health: Awareness, Access, Impact

The respondent reported that since March 2020 there have been no positive cases of COVID-19 in their neighbourhood and hence, no death due to COVID-19. No one in the neighbourhood complained of any health issues during the pandemic. The respondent further mentioned that everyone in her family is also doing well and not facing any health issues.

She reported that the family got information about the current COVID-19 crisis from the people in the neighbourhood. They also came to know, from the people around, about the lockdown and restrictions that were imposed and proposed by the Government to control the spread of the virus. She mentioned that in her knowledge cough, fever, headache and body ache were the symptoms of COVID-19. She had also heard people from the neighbourhood talk about the safety precautions like sanitizing hands, wearing mask and maintaining social distancing.

The respondent was also aware about the COVID-19 vaccine as she had heard about it from the people in her neighbourhood and from Prerana's social workers. She shared that the vaccine will help the body fight against the virus and will keep them protected. However, she had heard one of the neighbours talk about falling sick for 2-3 days after taking the vaccine. She further shared that though she is a little scared of falling sick and has not taken the COVID-19 vaccine yet, she has registered herself for the same. The registration process needed her Aadhar Card. She also shared that she would be taking her first dose of the vaccine in the following week (i.e. August 2021).

6. Impact on Household Economy

The respondent shared that she is the only earning member in the family and goes out for

rag-picking. She earns about Rs. 200/- to Rs. 300/- a day with which the household expenses like food grains/ration, vegetables, children's snacks etc. are met. The respondent goes out for work for around 25 days in a month.

When the first CiL was imposed in March 2020, the respondent could not go out for work for about 3 to 4 months. She was at home and there was no income for this duration.

After June 2020, she started going out for work as there were relaxations in the lockdown and the people were allowed to move around. From June 2020 to October 2020, the respondent was at her aunt's place in Byculla and was earning by selling corn and washing utensils at a nearby canteen.

Though she was not able to go out to work for 3-4 months, when she started going again, the per day earning was the same as it was before the lockdown. The respondent further shared that when she had resumed going out for rag-picking in November 2020 (once she was back in Sion), she was able to go out only for 2-3 days in a week and hence, her overall earning was affected. There was a net reduction in income.

When the 2nd CiL of April 2021, the respondent was able to go out for rag-picking in the same way as before the second lockdown, i.e., around 2-3 days in a week. From July'21 to August'21 (month of the interview), she could go out for rag-picking every day.

The respondent shared that during the first lockdown, when there was no source of income for 3-4 months, she used up her savings to manage the household expenses. Moreover, cooked food and dry ration assistance were provided free to them during that time by individual donors and police officials from her area.

She has not borrowed money from anyone since March 2020. The respondent further shared that post June 2020 whatever she had paid work, the household expenses were manageable in that earning. She was able to manage her expenses on the ration, vegetables, children's expenses like snacks etc. from her earnings.

7. Proof of Existence: Identity Documents and Entitlement Documents

The respondent has an Aadhar Card, PAN Card and a proof of residence. The last was generated by the local Municipal Corporator. The proof of residence mentions that the respondent is a resident of Sion. The eldest girl child has a birth certificate and the two youngest children (a boy and a girl) have an Affidavit of Birth. Other than this, the children do not have any other identity or entitlement documents. All the above-mentioned documents are with the respondent at their home in Sion, Mumbai. Moreover, the respondent does not have a bank account.

8. Provisioning of Essentials: Material and Social

The respondent shared that her ration card has been blocked for the past 8 years and she is unaware of the reason for the same. She thus does not receive ration from the authorised ration shops under the PDS. During the initial 3 to 4 months of the 1st CiL, the family received cooked food (hot meals) every day in the afternoon arranged by the police and in the evening by an individual donor. The food that was provided by both of them was generally either Dal/Chawal or Khichdi. The family also received dry ration (rice, pulses, oil, sugar, spices, wheat flour, salt) from one of the local leaders once during the first lockdown. This ration was sufficient for 10 days.

The respondent also mentioned that they had received dry ration (rice, oil, sugar, tea, potatoes) and Rs. 100/- in cash assistance from a nearby temple once during the 1st CiL and that sufficed for a week.

Other than this, the respondent shared that the family has received relief kits (ration and personal hygiene materials) from Prerana 4 times during both the lockdowns. The dry ration from Prerana included rice, wheat flour, sugar, spices, oil, salt, tea, milk powder, chocos (a wheat based cereal for kids) and the hygiene materials included toothpaste, soap, sanitary napkins. This supply was sufficient for 2 to 3 months.

The respondent said that she has sufficient rice for the month and based on the need she buys dal and other items from her earnings.

There has been a change in the eating habits of the family. Prior to CiL they used to take 3 meals a day. But when the 1st CiL was imposed, the family did not have enough food and hence, ate only twice a day. There was also a reduction in the consumption of non-vegetarian food as it is expensive. She observed that the family could not afford non-vegetarian food especially during the initial 4-5 months of the 1st CiL.

9. Access to Basic Amenities: Bad to worse

The respondent uses Chulha (hearth with woodfuel) for cooking food. She does not buy the wood but collects it when she goes out for rag-picking. The respondent further shared that one headload of wood is sufficient to be used for cooking for 2-3 days.

The respondent mentioned that they have a mori (a small open space in the house used for cleaning and bathing and such other sanitary purposes) in their home which they use for bathing.

The family uses a nearby “pay-and-use” public toilet. During the first CiL, when there was no source of income for the family, they were allowed to use the public toilet without having to pay for it at that moment, But later she had to pay the entire amount as she started going out for work.

10. Mental Health

The respondent shared that she was stressed when the 1st CiL was imposed as she could not go out for work. She was worried about how the household expenses would be met and due to the restrictions on mobility, she faced a feeling of helplessness.

The respondent did not go out to work for initial 3-4 months during the 1st CiL and was home bound. She stated that the home environment was supportive but the children used to fight with each other as they were mostly confined at home and unable to go out to play. She sometimes used to get frustrated because of the fight among the children. Moreover, she shared that the children were bored at home and hence, used to go out to play in the neighbourhood. They used to return home whenever the policemen would scold them as during the 1st CiL there were severe restrictions on movement in public places.

The respondent also shared that they all used to play games together at their home to overcome boredom. She further mentioned that the children never expressed the feelings of anger or sadness during the 1st and 2nd CiL although they were bored staying at home for so long.



Case Study 7

Unstructured interview & qualitative data collection: Mr. Snehanshu Shome
Respondent: Female, 35 Years, Mother of the child
Month of Interview: June 2021

1. Background of referral or contact with Prerana

A child from this family was rescued from begging by the D.B Marg police. After the rescue, the child was referred to Prerana by the CWC Mumbai Suburb 1 in November 2016.

The CWC restored the child to the family after 3 months of rescue and Prerana was given the follow-up Order of the child. Since then, Prerana has been supporting the child and the family also identifying areas of family strengthening and conducting regular home visits.

2. Forced Migration, Relocation Eviction

The Respondent's family stays near the Charni Rd railway station, Mumbai on the footpath since the last 8 years. The family consists of the respondent, her husband and their four children. All the children are boys – the elder one is 15 years while others are 14, 13 and 12 years of age respectively. During COVID-19 the family faced a number of issues and among them was the constant threats of eviction by the civic authorities with the police.

Since the 1st CiL, the family received threats of eviction from the municipal officials. They were told to move to Nalasopara a small place far away and outside the metropolitan Mumbai. However, the family's response for the authorities was that they would not go anywhere. The police however took action once in the month of June 2020 because of some incident in the community and destroyed their houses and destroyed their possessions and belongings like their clothes, utensils, gas cylinder and documents. The family got back the gas cylinder only after a lot of effort and several visits to the police station.

The family often visits the village where the respondent's parents reside. However, they stay there only for a few days there as they have no source of earning there. They have no plans to visit their village anytime soon.



3. Multidimensional Impact of Covid Induced Lockdown (CiL)

The respondent shared mixed feelings on the CiL. She shared that they were happy over the fact that the entire family could spend some time together. She would get a lot of time to spend with her children where they would watch a lot of videos on their mobile phone. She also mentioned that often staying together all the time also led to friction, altercation and distress. Both, she and her husband had lost their jobs which had created stress and anxiety. She also spoke about how her husband displaced his frustration on her with verbal altercation. There were times when they had no food at home and those times were quite hard. She often felt helpless and the uncertainties, not knowing how to get their meals, also added to the stress. Her husband who is alcohol dependent, did not give up alcohol consumption. With no source of income, and not having any money to provide for minimal food for the family, the expenses on alcohol would enormously add to stress and tension. The respondent seemed relieved that her husband even under the influence of alcohol did not have any altercations with anyone in the community. Even when they had no jobs her husband could not leave his drinking habits however, he never physically abused or assaulted anyone in the family.

The respondent also shared that they went to the village once during the CiL. They brought a ration of Rs. 2000/- to Rs. 3000/- while going to the village but came back after the ration ended because they had no source of income there. She also mentioned that the family doesn't have anyone at the village to help them in a situation of crisis. Her mother-in-law stays nearby and is a big support to her family.

4. Situation of Children: Unlevelled field in obstacles race

Two of the children in the family have been staying at the Salaam Balak Trust (SBT) Open Shelter located near Charni Road Station, Mumbai since 2017. They attend educational sessions at the centers and have also been enrolled at a BMC School in Andheri which is very near to the SBT shelter. The Open Shelter provides them with laptop and/or mobiles to attend online classes of the school. The other two children stay with the family and are enrolled at a private School in Charni Road itself. They attend their online classes through their father's or relatives' mobile phone. The child's mother mentioned that it was best when the children would go to school because then they would at least learn something. With online education, children start their online classes and soon indulge in other activities like play online games, click pictures or play outdoor games because of which their education is affected.

The respondent mentioned that when the children would go to school (i. e. during their offline education), they would mention that their teachers taught them through activities. They would come home and share with the respondent about all they learned in their schools. With online education however, children are not able to focus since there is no supervision and she feels that hence their studies are adversely affected.

During the 1st CiL, in absence of physical mobility the major source of entertainment for children was online through mobile phone like playing online games. The respondent mentioned that sometimes the entire family together played Ludo on their mobile phone. If they go out and play the police would reprimand them and sometimes scold or beat them that is why they seldom played outdoors.

5. Pandemic and Health: Awareness, Access, Impact

The respondent mentioned that during COVID-19 they had little knowledge of what the pandemic was and how it was going to affect them. They got most of the information from their neighbors and the community who had informed them to wear a mask or to maintain safe distance from other people. They also received some information from television shows and news that because of COVID-19 people got sick and a lot of people died. They only got to know it first-hand when one of the respondent's children was tested positive of COVID-19.

Before the child was tested positive, he fell sick and was taken to a nearby hospital. When they got to know that the child had COVID-19, the hospital admitted him immediately to monitor his health for 10 days. When the news of the child being COVID-19 positive got out, and subsequently hospitalized nobody in the community would talk to him and his family members or reach out to help them out of fear. During the 10 days of hospitalization, the respondent followed all the protocols but stayed with the child. After 10 days, the child was shifted to a Quarantine Center run by 'Mumbai Smiles' to ensure his recovery and also for the protection of other children and neighbours around. Some people from the community gave them cooked food but nobody helped for coordinating with the hospital or for travel. The respondent shared that she understood that people were only taking precautions, but it also meant they had to do everything on their own.

The respondent further shared about the incidence where her other child met with an accident during the CiL. The child was sleeping on the footpath when a vehicle ran over his leg. His leg was fractured and had to be rushed to the hospital.

This incident during the pandemic added to the stress and financial burden of the family. The child was distressed and his recovery took several days. During their financial situation which was already critical this added considerable burden. The costs of medicines and hospitalization were difficult for the family to meet. The respondent shared that it was a difficult time for the family.

The respondent shared about a goddess that the Pardhi community (all the families living nearby along with the respondent's family belong to this DNT community) worship and how she is related to COVID-19. The people say that the goddess has spoken to some people in the community that there is no such thing as COVID-19. The goddess has asked the people to worship her by regularly performing certain rituals. The respondent's family has yet not done the ritual, but she was to perform them soon.

The respondent has heard the children's teacher telling them over the phone about the vaccine. She however said that apart from some preliminary information on how the vaccination will prevent them from getting COVID she knew very little. She said that she was unsure as to how would they receive these vaccines and what one needed to do for receiving the vaccine.

6. Impact on Household Economy

The respondent reported that both, she and her husband, used to work before the 1st CiL. She would earn Rs. 500/- to Rs. 600/- in a day from selling Gajra and balloons. Her husband worked for a company as a driver where he would receive a monthly salary of Rs. 12,000/- but both of them lost their primary source of income due to the 1st lockdown.

The current financial status of the family is critical since the respondent is the single earning member of the family.

She sells breakfast like Poha and eggs from her home. There are 50-100 families living in the neighbourhood who buy from her. She sells an egg for Rs. 10/- and Poha plate for the same. They receive a profit of Rs. 300/- to Rs. 500/- per day from the business. She started this business by serving 10 customers initially for which she invested Rs. 200/- to Rs. 300/-..

7. Proof of Existence: Identity Documents and Entitlement Documents

All the family members have Aadhar Card, the respondent and her husband also have PAN cards with the address of Charni Road mentioned on it. They also have a pink Ration Card with them. They do not have a Voter Card.

8. Provisioning of Essentials: Material and Social

The family has a Jan Dhan bank account on which they have once received Rs 500/- during the 1st CiL. The family still has a stock of bare minimum dry ration. She has been provided with ration support many times during both the CiLs. She mentioned that Prerana was one such CSO that provided her with ration relief but apart from that they also received cooked food from the BMC which is provided to the family occasionally twice a day. Ration relief was also provided to her by individuals providing cooked food like Khichdi. Baring a few days the family managed to have at least two meals daily since the 1st lockdown.

They still receive dry ration or cooked food from individuals on most days. They also access ration from the local ration shop under the PDS, where they get 3 kg of wheat @ Rs. 3/- per kg and 3kgs for rice for Rs. 2/- per kg. Sometimes they also get pulses on the pink Ration card. Besides Prerana they also got dry ration from Salaam Balak Trust. Currently, they have dry ration which will last only for a month.

9. Access to Basic Amenities: Bad to worse

The family uses gas cylinders primarily to cook food at home. They have brought the cylinder for Rs. 3,000/- from a nearby shop. The gas cylinder is not under the Ujjwala Yojana. It is supplied by a local shopkeeper unofficially. For refills they need to pay Rs. 400/- and Rs. 100/- for its transportation as it is heavy. The 5 kg cylinder usually lasts for a month for the family. The family uses the community toilet located 2 minutes away from their house where they are charged Rs. 5/- for using the basic toilet facilities and Rs. 20/- per use for bathing and washing clothes. These rates were unchanged throughout the 1st CiL.

During the 1st CiL there were times when the toilets were closed down. During those times the family had to use the community toilet a little away at Charni Rd. station which is also near their home. There were also times during both the lockdowns when they did not have money to pay for using the toilet and hence were not allowed to use the toilet.

10. Mental Health

The respondent mentioned that even though the family faced a lot of challenges with eviction and their job, they are still trying to cope. She said that the family spent as much time together as possible during both the lockdown which helped them survive through the crisis.

The respondent shared about a particular incident when her husband had provided a loan of Rs. 5,000/- to his friend which created a tense situation at home. The respondent was not happy because her husband did not consult her before giving that money as a loan. She mentioned that then the family itself was struggling with ration and basic finances and that money could have been used for themselves.

The respondent described that for a few days the situation was tense at the house where she and her husband would often argue about the incident.

The respondent is currently facing domestic violence which she had never faced before the pandemic, her husband now vents out his frustration of having no work by shouting and abusing her and the children.

During this tense time, the child who was deeply affected with the tense situation at home ran away from his home. He was tired of witnessing his parents fighting all the time. After he ran off his parents looked for him everywhere checking with neighbours, relatives and friends about his whereabouts. They went to a number of places to look for him and much later they got to know that the child was staying at the house of one of his friends in Grant Road.

The respondent shared that few incidences like these and when her children were hospitalized had a huge impact on the lives of her family member. There were times when they were in distress because there was no one to help them in the tough times. The children would often feel anxious with the whole situation. She and her husband live under the fear that lockdown like situation could happen again.



Case Study 8

Unstructured interview & qualitative data collection: Mr. Snehanshu Shome
Respondent: Female, 40 Years, Mother of the child
Month of Interview: June 2021

1. Background of referral or contact with Prerana

A child from this family was rescued by the Bandra police from begging. After the rescue, the child was referred to Prerana by the CWC Mumbai Suburb 1 in March 2017. The CWC restored the child to the family and Prerana was given the follow-up Order of the child. Since then, Prerana has been following up on the status of the child and conducting regular home visits.

2. Forced Migration, Relocation Eviction

The Respondent's family stays under the flyover at Bandra in Mumbai currently. The area is called *lal mitti* by the residents where more than 20 families camp on the footpath. The family has a temporary shelter over the roadside, there is no roof over the house and during the monsoon season they take shelter under a plastic sheet. The respondent has been living in that place for 15 years now since her marriage and has continued to stay there even after her husband's death. During the 1st CiL and even before that the municipal authorities asked them several times to leave the place. No alternative has been shown to them. They are just told to move from the place where they are living. The respondent however mentioned that even after being told by the municipality, they have not relocated anywhere and have been staying in the same place over the last few years.

The family's native village is in Gujarat. The child and his mother rarely visit their native village. The last time they visited the village was in January 2021 for their daughter's marriage. The mother said that they had no immediate plans to go to the village and they would go there only after the child who is 13 years old now gets married. The child's mother's family lives in the native village. The respondent further added that her mother and father along with her brother stay in the village and they are her closest contacts.



3. Multidimensional Impact of Covid Induced Lockdown (CiL)

The respondent shared that her family stays in the village. Her family in the village includes her mother, father, brother and sister-in-law. The respondent feels that her family is her support system and she can rely on them for any material or emotional support. She gets in touch with her mother and father when she is in distress and needs to share her worries. During the 1st CiL she reached out to her family several times to talk with them when she was anxious or confused. If there is an urgent requirement of financial support, her brother sends her the money. During the 1st CiL, her brother sent the money through some relatives who came to Mumbai from their village.

The respondent mentioned that because her earning was low during both the CiL, the family suffered financially. She tries to stay emotionally strong for her kids. She said that initially when the 1st CiL was imposed, she was very confused with the situation but gradually, she moved forward and is now focusing on her work for their survival.

The respondent shared that when she got the news of COVID-19 and the subsequent 1st CiL, she did not understand it and did not think it was a big deal. Even now after several months, she shares that she has only heard about the pandemic but has not seen anything different happening around her, except for the panic and closure because of which people like her lost their livelihood and faced hardship due to the severe restrictions on mobility. She lamented that the harsh reality is that now there are lesser people on the road to buy the baskets from her.

4. Situation of Children: Unlevelled field in obstacles race

The respondent has two children, a 13 years old son and a daughter. The son is in 5th standard.

He has an older sister who got married in January 2021 when the 1st CiL was partially lifted. The respondent said that her daughter is 18 years old but there was a lack of document to confirm her age. The daughter and daughter's husband currently reside in the native village and will come to meet their family next week, first time after her marriage. The respondent shared that she talks with her daughter on a regular basis. The respondent's age is around 40 and she is a widow.

The respondent shared that there was no provision of online education during the pandemic.

The schools were shut, which they came to know when they went to the school and found it locked. During the 1st CiL they went to the school several times but found it locked all the time. Some of their neighbours informed them that the teachers have gone home to their villages and the school would not open for a long time. Nobody from the school contacted them during both the CiL or even after that. The respondent shared that she was concerned that a whole year (academic year 2020-21) of the child is lost without education and they were also worried if the schools would even open now (as of June 2021). The school in which the son is enrolled in is a government aided school which is at a walking distance of 10 minutes from their home.

The respondent shared that her son goes out to play often because he does not have to attend any online classes and has a lot of free time. Since their home is on the street, the child usually plays on the roadside only and also in a nearby park. The mother shared that the child wears masks when he goes out to play. However, just before the interview, the child had come after playing from the park nearby and he was not wearing any mask whatsoever.

The respondent shared that she was aware of few basic safety rules regarding COVID-19 like wearing a mask or washing hands which they got to know from their neighbours. They said that they follow some of these precautions of them most of the times.

The respondent shared that the child spends most of his time playing video games on the family's mobile phone. His recreational activities include playing mobile video games and playing in the park with his friends.

5. Pandemic and Health: Awareness, Access, Impact

The respondent shared that they did not get any COVID cases in the neighbourhood neither has she heard of any such cases or of any deaths that have occurred around her. The Respondent also shared that the family's health has been well since the pandemic and none of the family members had any health troubles.

Regarding the vaccine, there was a strong opinion that she or other family members would not take it. The Respondent shared that it was the same for most of the people in her community. The respondent shared that among the people living in their immediate neighbourhood nobody was COVID positive and hence she feels the vaccine is unnecessary. She also said that she had heard cases like these from her neighbours and relatives where people took vaccines and died. Even on our explaining the benefits of the vaccine the respondent was clear that she did not want the vaccine.

It is also required to mention that the respondent said that during the COVID-19 crisis, they have never been given any information by any government authorities about the disease or the vaccine. She said she was only aware of the basic safety precautions like wearing a mask, and washing hands but beyond that she was unaware of what

else has been laid down by the government. The only thing she had noticed was that the government vehicle would come once in a while to disinfect the streets.

6. Impact on Household Economy

The family's primary earning is through selling bamboo baskets which are sold from their residence or from nearby market places. Their residence is on the road side, so some customers directly buy from them. The Respondent makes the bamboo baskets like several of her neighbours who stay beside them and then sells them. She is the only earning member in the family. She buys the raw materials including the bamboo from a nearby market which is not far away from her residence. During the 1st CiL there was some difficulty in going to the market but they still could manage it. One bamboo stem costs her Rs. 80/- while she can make two baskets out of one. The baskets are sold at Rs. 70/- per piece (the price has fallen down since the 1st CiL). On an average she used to sell 10-15 baskets everyday but now she is only able to sell 3 or 4 baskets in a day. Sometimes all the basket makers in her neighbourhood rent a vehicle to take their baskets to a bigger market in Dadar, Mumbai and sell those there.

Because of the pandemic, their business is not going so well and there is decrease in the sale of baskets. The baskets that the respondents used to sell for Rs. 100/- earlier now sells for Rs. 70/- now. Since the 1st CiL, she also has less customers now. The Dadar market is also closed for them to sell since the 1st CiL, because of which they have to go to the far off places like Kurla or Thane to sell the baskets. They travel to these markets by pooling in money with other basket sellers and hiring a tempo to transport the baskets.

At these markets they do not have any designated spots to sell. They have to roam around and sell the baskets.

The respondent shared that she had borrowed money of small amounts only from her brother or other family members last year. She will return the borrowed amount when she would have surplus. Currently, there is no pressure on her to return the loan.

7. Proof of Existence: Identity Documents and Entitlement Documents

The respondent shared that the adults in the family had Aadhaar Card and PAN Card while the children also have only Aadhaar Card. They keep these documents secured in plastic bags so as to avoid them getting spoiled especially during monsoon. The family does not have a ration card nor a bank account.

8. Provisioning of Essentials: Material and Social

The respondent reported that no relief material was provided by any government agencies during the both CiL periods. However, they had received ration support from Prerana. The family was receiving food from Roti bank prior to the 1st CiL but it has stopped since then. They are provided cooked food by individual donors quite a few times during both the CiLs. The ration provided to them through Prerana consisted of oils, spices, rice, flour and hygiene products like soaps. This covered most of their urgent needs during the pandemic.

During the pandemic some days they did not have enough ration at the house for even a single meal in a day. During these times, she had to rely on financial assistance from her relatives and extended family to buy ration. As of June 2021, the ration situation at her household is better and they would somehow manage with the ration for the month.

However, she said that if ration was provided to her, it would be a relief for the family. The family was currently managing two - three meals in a day, they have to skip a few meals someday when the ration is over. She also commented that it is not unusual as even before the pandemic, the family would struggle hard to secure three meals in a day and could manage only two.

9. Access to Basic Amenities: Bad to worse

The respondent shared that her family uses chulha (hearth run on wood fuel) at home to cook food. They had not received cooking gas under the Central government's scheme Ujwala. They get the firewood for the chulha from a nearby store which they purchase at Rs. 10/- per kg.

The family uses a nearby public toilet. Since the family lives in an open space on the road side, they do not have their own toilet at home and are dependent on public toilets. The respondent shared that the public toilet is free for using basic services and charges Rs. 5/- per use per person for bathing and washing clothes.

10. Mental Health

During both the CiL, she feels that her family has not been much affected emotionally. There has not been much change in the family's home environment. Even during the 1st CiL, the family was selling baskets on the roadside and hence not much has changed even though their earning has reduced.

However, the only thing that she worries most about is that her child needs to go to school and that he should not waste too much time at home. She has also seen that in her neighbourhood there was an increase in incidences of substance abuse and there was a feeling of hopelessness among the families

in her community when their work stopped during the 1st CiL. She feels that she and her family have tried to stay positive throughout the CiL.

The respondent shared that she tried to maintain her calm during both the CiL, because if she wasn't then who would take care of her children. She mentioned that even when there was stress to procure ration she would deal with the issues and keep working.



Case Study 9

Unstructured interview & qualitative data collection: Ms. Millie Mathew

Respondent: Female, 35 Years, Mother of the child

Month of Interview: September 2021

1. Background of referral or contact with Prerana

A child from this family was rescued from begging by the Juhu police. After the rescue, the child was referred to Prerana by the CWC Mumbai suburb 1. During Prerana's social investigation the team learnt that the child was enrolled in a private Gujarati medium school in the 1st std. (in 2017). The CWC restored the child to the family on grounds that the family has a house, income and is capable of taking care of the child. Prerana was given the follow-up order of the child. Since then, Prerana has been following up on the status of the child and conducting regular home visits.

2. Forced Migration, Relocation Eviction

The respondent shared that there are 7 members in his family and they have been staying in Ville Parle, a suburb of Mumbai, Maharashtra for the last 7 years. They live in a slum settlement in a house made of asbestos (patra). The family's native place is in Mehsana, Gujarat, but the entire family was born and raised in Dahisar, Mumbai.

In Ville Parle, the family had lived on the footpath for many years, till they got a room on rent. As of September 2021, the rent was Rs. 1000/-. Before moving to Ville Parle, the family used to live in Dahisar, Mumbai, in a tent in a hutment. During that time the police would evict families living there and throw away their belongings. They would have to move from the area every time the police came. According to the respondent, the footpath where the settlement was located, was cleared in 2016 due to the construction of a building. After the demolition of the settlement, the family moved to Ville Parle.

3. Multidimensional Impact of Covid Induced Lockdown (CiL)

The respondent shared that during the CiL the children spent their days watching television and playing outdoors with siblings and friends in the neighbourhood. They played in the little open space right outside their houses. The respondent shared that the family never stepped out during the first and second lockdown. If the police saw anyone outside, they would hit them with sticks.



Fearing this the parents would not let their children out. The police would beat them if they were seen begging or went out to buy vegetables.

The respondent also recalled that during the CiL her husband had stopped consuming alcohol and chewing tobacco due to its unavailability. She observed that despite the unavailability, her husband did not have any withdrawal symptoms. He behaved well, she observed. The respondent said that the home environment was cordial and there were no incidents of violence, altercation or abuse among family members. The family adjusted to the situation and managed to live peacefully during the pandemic.

4. Situation of Children: Unlevelled field in obstacles race

There are 4 children and 3 adults in the family. The oldest son is 19 years, the second is 14 and the youngest is 10. The respondent's two daughters are 6 and 5 years old. As of September 2021, they didn't go to school. The respondent said that the girls will be enrolled in school when the school reopens. Schools have been shut throughout both the CiLs and even after and the respondent's children have not been going to school. They are enrolled in a local private Gujarati medium school in Ville Parle a suburb in Mumbai. The respondent shared that they were not aware of the online mode of education and they don't have a phone. A teacher from their local school takes tuition for children in the community, who do not have smartphones and thus could not benefit from online classes. The respondent informed that the children also attend this tuition class. However, despite their keen interest in getting their children educated as the schools are shut from the first lockdown till September 2021, their children have not been attending school.

5. Pandemic and Health: Awareness, Access, Impact

The respondent said that no one in their family, and neither did anyone in their neighbourhood was infected by the COVID-19 virus. They learnt about COVID-19 when the staff of the BMC (Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation) Health department came to the community for COVID-19 testing. At that time, they were told about the protocols that had to be followed like washing hands frequently, wearing a mask whenever they left their homes and maintaining social distance.

They were provided with masks and sanitisers by the BMC health staff. Apart from this, during the first and second CiL, the families did not fall ill. Sometimes they did get cold and flu, but otherwise they were fine.

6. Impact on Household Economy

During the pandemic and the subsequent CiL, the respondent couldn't go out for work and neither did they have any alternative source of income. The family earned money by selling old clothes and strings of Jasmine ('gajra'), near the Mithibai college, Ville Parle, Mumbai. They have been doing this work for a long time and their previous generations also did the same work. However, during the first and second lockdown, they didn't have any source of income. They depended on their savings, which helped them survive during both lockdowns. However, the family had to manage with very little resources. They stopped drinking tea since tea powder is expensive. The respondent shared that the family washed clothes once a week because they couldn't buy soap and would use washing soap for bathing. Very often they had to go without a bathing soap and detergent.

The respondent shared that they were unable to afford rent, which was Rs. 1,000/- p.m.

By August 2021 the total unpaid rent had piled up to Rs.18,000/-. The family's financial situation had not improved since the first lockdown and they still couldn't afford to pay the rent. The family got some work from September 2021, but it was not sufficient for their expenses. The respondent mentioned that since they have now started getting some work, they will start paying the rent in instalments.

During the Ganesh festival, they couldn't earn the usual festival based money. In a normal year they would bring home a decent income of Rs. 15,000/- to Rs. 20,000/-

On the contrary this season they had to borrow Rs. 4,000/- from their neighbours and friends. They also bought food on credit from the local grocery shop.

Unlike many families in their community, the respondent's family did not go to their village in Mehsana, Gujarat during the CiL. They never go to their village because they don't have a family and a source of income. They have a house but going there is an added expenditure.

7. Proof of Existence: Identity Documents and Entitlement Documents

The respondent shared that all members in the family have their Aadhaar cards and both parents have their PAN cards. They have the birth certificates of all the children stored safely. However, no one in the family has a bank account. The respondent said that they don't have a ration card and electoral card either. They also mentioned that they have not applied to the concerned authorities for their identity documents.

8. Provisioning of Essentials: Material and Social

The respondent shared that during both the CiL they only received food-grain and other essential support from Prerana, that sufficed

for a month. During the lockdown they didn't cook food like they usually do. The respondent said that they only cooked food once a day, which was mostly rice, dal and some vegetables. They couldn't afford to buy and cook non-veg food (mainly chicken). They did not receive support from anyone else. Neither the local corporator helped them nor did they approach the corporator for help. The family does not have a ration card and therefore did not receive any food grains under the PDS.

9. Access to Basic Amenities: Bad to worse

The respondent's family lives in a very small but pucca house. They have a small TV, a fan, a tube light, a bulb and a lot of old clothes in their house, which they sell. The piles of clothes created a huge mess and an unhygienic situation. During the interview, the small child had defecated on the floor on some of the clothes. The mother simply picked up the cloth and threw it out. Upon observation, it was found that they have very few utensils in their kitchen, like 2-3 big pots for cooking rice, dal, one wok and 4 to 5 plates. They also had some spoons. The family uses a gas cylinder of 5 litre capacity which costs around Rs. 600/- and lasts for a month. They use community toilets, which costs them Rs. 3/- to Rs. 5/- per visit. The electricity bill comes to an average of Rs. 300/- p.m., which they pay in instalments to the room owner.

10. Mental Health

The respondent recalled that during both the lockdowns, the children would get irritable because they had to stay home all the time. They would fight over who got to watch their show on TV, which would irritate the parents. Due to limited resources, children would also nag them about the food and their oldest son would constantly get into altercation with the mother (the respondent).

Children were not even attending online school, which perhaps also added to their irritability.

Managing expenses was their toughest challenge as everything from food to kerosene had become exorbitantly expensive. The respondent shared that stress and anxiety were very high because of the limited savings and as they had no source of earning for several months. They were brought to a point where they could not even afford to take a bath because they could not afford soap. Living in that kind of an environment, in addition to the fear of COVID-19, where one needed to regularly sanitize only added to their stress.



Case Study 10

Unstructured interview & qualitative data collection: Mr. Millie Mathew

Respondent: Female, 28 Years, Mother of the child

Month of Interview: August 2021

1. Background of referral or contact with Prerana

A girl child from this family was rescued from begging by the police in 2018. After the rescue, the child was referred to Prerana by the CWC Mumbai Suburb 1 which ordered for the child to be rehabilitated and placed in a CCI in 2018. Prerana was given the follow-up Order of the child and to visit the family. Since then, Prerana has been following up on the status of the child and conducting regular home visits.

2. Forced Migration, Relocation Eviction

The respondent said that the family has been living in Kandivali, Mumbai, Maharashtra for the last 20 years. The respondent himself was born and raised in the same location in Kandivali. There are 6 members in the family and one girl child is placed in the CCI (Child Care Institution). The child was found begging and was rescued by the police in 2018. The CWC (Child Welfare Committee) ordered for the child to be rehabilitated and placed in a CCI. Prerana was given the follow-up order of the child by the CWC. The Sanmaan team has been regularly following up with the child at the CCI and also conducting visits to the family.

Earlier the respondent's family used to live right where the stairs of the foot-over-bridge at Kandivali railway station touched the ground. They lived there with a community of 25+ families, who also have been living there for over 20 years. These families lived in tents and primarily depended on selling articles, begging and on daily wage work to sustain them. Many residents in the area and passers-by would give alms and food to them. The families, however, have regularly (the respondent did not share how often this happened) faced harassment from the police, like their things being thrown away, tents dismantled, and sometimes even by burning their belongings. Due to this, they have lost their identity documents, except their Aadhar cards. Several members of the community would sleep on the adjoining footpath at night, due to cramped conditions in their tents. However, this created an unsafe situation for them because vehicles such as buses and trucks passing by would not notice them sleeping on the footpath.

The police made the families move from that location. The respondent's family and a couple of other families were moved on the skywalk in Kandivali (east) and the other families were moved to different locations in the area. Some families have migrated back to their native place. The respondent shared that he feels a loss of community due to the relocation and that life has become very difficult on the skywalk.

The respondent said that they have been living on the skywalk since the first lockdown was imposed. Their living conditions have deteriorated over time. They don't feel comfortable living in close proximity with the other families. The families continued to face harassment from the police like before, and that has made everyday life very difficult for them.

3. Multidimensional Impact of Covid Induced

Lockdown (CiL)
The respondent said that moving to the bridge has made life more difficult. They have lost the sense of community they had earlier and now live a scattered life on the bridge. Earlier they could depend on the families around them for food or money if needed. Since the relocation, they do not have that sense of security. The family does not have access to the water pipe they had earlier, which has led to the children developing skin infections. For a bath, they have to use the public washroom which costs Rs. 20 per use for bathing and washing clothes.

The respondent said that sometimes they did not eat the cooked food that they received while begging because it was often stale or contaminated. However, during the lockdown, they ate whatever they could and were highly dependent on the food they received. The income they got from daily wage work was insufficient for the family.

The families on the skywalk, including the respondent's, continued to face harassment from police such as throwing their belongings away and disrupting their life through constant scrutiny.

4. Situation of Children: Unlevelled field in obstacles race

The respondent has four children. The oldest daughter is 12, the second daughter is 11, and their two sons are 8 and 3. The respondent said that the children have a phone. They were able to continue their online education during the lockdown. Four children are enrolled in a BMC (Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation) school in Kandivali, Mumbai and one girl child is in CCI. A volunteer teacher from the school used to take study classes for the children as well. The teacher would gather the children and take these study classes in school. She started this initiative for children who could not attend online class. The respondent's second daughter is currently in a Child Care Institution (CCI). The last time the family spoke to her was on the phone during Prerana's ration distribution drives. The respondent said that they are relieved that she is in the CCI safe, well and studying. They expressed that they wanted the same environment for their other children because they live an extremely uncertain life on the streets.

5. Pandemic and Health: Awareness, Access, Impact

The respondent said that the family learned about COVID-19 from the news on their mobile phone. No one in their family had tested positive till September, 2021. They said that they follow the protocols such as sanitizing and using a mask as much as possible. However, their living condition, on the skywalk, has made it extremely difficult to be careful.

The respondent said that the family will take the vaccine when it is available and when they can access it.

When the family used to live near the foot-over-bridge at the end of the stairs, they had access to a water pipe line, the water from which they used for bathing and washing clothes. They don't have easy access to clean water now and that has made it difficult to maintain basic hygiene. Especially, the children had developed blisters, which were from some infection. Those children move around in the area and play barefoot. They don't have regular baths, because of which they got the infection. The parents are scared to take them to the hospital due to the fear of COVID-19. The respondent feels that they can manage such infections themselves and get it cured at some stage. They fear that if they test COVID positive, the situation will become unmanageable for them.

The child's mother has a physical disability the reason for which is not known.

6. Impact on Household Economy

The respondent said that none of the earning members in the family had any work during the first and the second CiL. Before the lockdown, they used to earn a living by selling rudraksha (rosary), and would also beg for alms. During the lockdowns, they were dependent on external charitable sources who gave them cooked food. The respondent said that sometimes they also got food from local Mahila Mandals. (women's groups). Over the previous month i. e. September 2021, they had found gainful work on construction sites and of sweeping apartment buildings where they earn around Rs. 300/- to Rs. 400/- per day. However, it is infrequent and hence not enough to take care of the needs of the family.

For using the public washroom alone the family has to pay Rs. 150/- per week which adds to their financial burden. In May 2021 he had taken a loan of Rs. 5,000/- from a relative, to sustain themselves till they found any work. The respondent said that they will return the money soon, as work is slowly picking up pace.

The respondent said that the family went to their village in Pune during the 2nd CiL. In absence of gainful work this seemed their best survival strategy. They lived with a few relatives for nearly 10 days. In Pune also, the family begged for money and sometimes food. The respondent said that if they needed any help, the sarpanch of their village would support them since he was also their childhood friend. The respondent also shared that the family has been in dispute with their chacha (father's brother) over the property. The family owns a certain piece of land (2 cents/2000 sq. feet) but they aren't able to claim it because they would have to hire a lawyer which they cannot afford. The respondent did not share more than that about the dispute.

7. Proof of Existence: Identity Documents and Entitlement Documents

The respondent said that all family members have their Aadhar cards, but they do not have any other identity proof. The family had misplaced their important documents like bank passbooks and even Aadhar cards due to the routine police action of displacing them and destroying their documents.

8. Provisioning of Essentials: Material and Social

The respondent said that the last time they received foodgrains under the PDS was 6 months ago, i.e. sometime in March 2021. Many residents and passers-by reached out to them and gave hot meal but sometimes it would have stones, and worms.

They could not always have the hot meal/cooked food. Apart from this, they received dry ration only from Prerana, which was in September 2021.

9. Access to Basic Amenities: Bad to worse

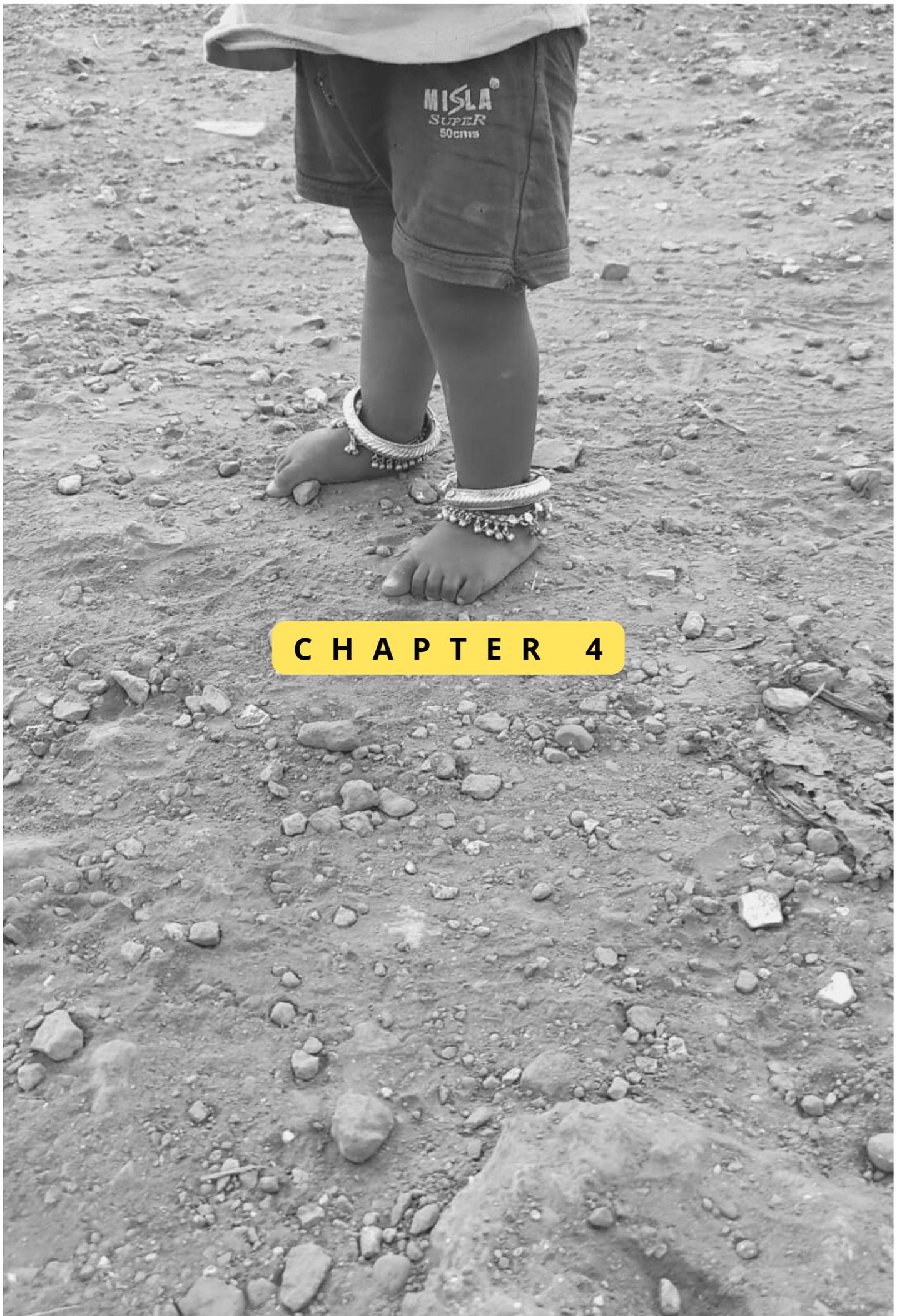
The family lives on a skywalk, with couple of other families near them. They don't have access to any basic amenities. They only have a few belongings such as clothes, 5 to 6 utensils like bowls and plates, mats, blankets, and some food items in bags. The respondent said that they cook food on a chulha (hearth) once or twice a week. They get wood free of charge from a local fruit vendor. The respondent shared that cooking food under their circumstance is difficult and they didn't even have the money to buy food for cooking. They use public washrooms for bathing and toilet against a payment of Rs. 150/- a week on charges for the same. However, using the public washroom adds to their financial burdens, which is why they avoid it as much as they can.

10. Mental Health

The family lived under two challenging situation that caused it enormous stress the fear of the deadly infection tackling which they knew little about and the sword of eviction constantly hanging on their head.

The respondent said that they were scared to go to the hospital if they fell ill with whatever illness as they were afraid of contracting COVID-19 in the process. The family lost contact with the other families that they lived with as most people went in isolation. That induced a sense of insecurity and fear in them. The adjustment to the challenges of living and the sudden loss of income has taken a heavy toll on the mental state of the family. Even though they manage with the food they get from charitable sources, every day is a struggle, filled with uncertainty.





C H A P T E R 4



Interpretation & Recommendation

This was a study urgently undertaken in order to understand the existential conditions of a certain group of long marginalized families in the context of their mainstream society itself having been caught up in a worst ever pandemic. It was carried out in the most unfriendly and often hostile environment created due to the pandemic. It might not and could not have met all the conditions of a rigorous scientific study but it is authentic based on the first hand observations and interactions with the families which were willing to share openly because of the prior goodwill contact with Prerana. The following text presents an interpretation of a few important areas of inquiry and the recommendations based thereupon for the use by the State and the civil society working for the protection of these children and their families.

The 10 cases covered under the study indicate certain commonalities in the stories of the 10 families of the children found begging in Mumbai and Navi Mumbai, rescued by the authorities or outreached by Prerana and brought into the protective fold of the juvenile justice system.

The stories unfold their struggle to survive and stay together during the Covid induced Lockdown (CiL).

The stories are about their agonizing trail and struggle for survival amidst the extremely hostile and challenging conditions created on a largescale by the Pandemic caused by the Corona virus. The extremities of the adversities are made more severe by many factors like being caught unprepared. The state of uncertainty was the only certain thing about the calamity. The already fragile existence of these families has been made more hopeless as the pandemic has engulfed the entire humanity with no one safe and in a stable position to help out another in the crisis.

Inductively and empirically, it has already been established that most of the children found begging in public places of metropolitan Mumbai belong to the ex-criminal tribes now (since 1951) labelled as the De-Notified Tribes or the DNTs. The particular group of DNTs represents the worst example of structurally unfolded violence against a group of humanity that compels them initially to adopt a life of crime



Identity Documents

Means of Livelihood

Attitudes towards Vaccination

Awareness about COVID-19

Access to Basic Amenities

Areas of Recommendation

Online Education

Domestic Violence

Private vs Public Healthcare

Mental Health

Cultural Factors

to survive and later a life of begging suffering deprivation and humiliation. They have a long history of constant unsettlement and repeated evictions. Forced migration to metropolitan spaces gave them a hope if not a stable abode. They sought formal education for their children to break out of the vicious cycle of illiteracy and backwardness.

The story of historical unsettlement is seen continuing through their repeated evictions from their life in camps in open spaces. The eviction by the municipal authorities and the police is seen getting intensified and become brutal in the harsher times of CiL. The evictions have a viciousness mixed into it. The police thinks that if they destroy the documents of these communities establishing their identity as human beings, citizens, or weaker sections with name and photo and place of birth etc. then the city roads will not carry the ugly blisters on their faces in the form of the camps of their topless houses in open space with tattered walls. As a result of this mindset of the civic authorities and police these people dispossess the documents that establish their identity and eligibility thereby remaining deprived of the state sponsored rightful social protection measures.

Documents

Considering the crucial importance and indispensability of Personal Identity Documents and Eligibility Documents it is highly recommended that the state with help of the civil society organizations active in this field should undertake a crash program of generating, issuing and protecting a whole set of Personal Identity documents and Entitlement/Eligibility documents. Similarly, considering their history and the nature of their involuntarily unsettled lifestyle a provision must be made to access those documents with the help of their biometrics like finger prints or iris.

Their number being very small and manageable this too should not place a significant burden on the state resources.

Settled Abode

Most people except those with pucca and legal rented houses have lost their places of nightly rest in the eviction drives which were intensified formally by the state to curb the movement of the public in public places during day and the night to curb the spread of the virus. In the process they have also lost their precious documents of identity and eligibility. The eviction drives were also fortified with physical violence, verbal abuse, destruction of possessions, humiliation and a shower of blows below the belt. As one of the most urgent measures the State should end their homelessness by providing to them alternative houses or residential plots on sites and services basis. Considering the small number of these families this should not be a significant burden for the state.

Erosion of the means of livelihood

The CiL impacted the global economy severely. The marginalized families were worst hit by the collapse. Worksite were shut down, transportation was closed. The families had no economic support systems. Unlike the middle classes they also did not have significant savings to bank upon. The condition of their relatives back home in the villages too was no different and hence in the cold winter of joblessness they could not migrate to warmer places where the cost of living was a little bearable. Soon they had their meagre savings eroded. They sold their valuables and soon became indebted to informal sources of loan. While the earnings from wage work or by sale of flowers or garlands or baskets were significantly reduced the prices of essentials skyrocketed.

In a vacuum of wage opportunities, they resorted to begging sometime for their entire survival or at times to supplement the food grains they received from the state and the civil society. Begging invited punitive action by the police.

It is very important that on the lines of the order passed by the Delhi High Court with regards to the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959, decriminalizing begging the Maharashtra government should follow suit. [3]

Eventually, with progressive unlocking they started getting some gainful work for a few days in a week if not on all weekdays. The originally fragile economy has now become overburdened with indebtedness.

The new and other adult men and women can be, on rights and voluntary basis, given specific skills to help them become employable human resources. Many of them are currently engaged in unskilled work in the lowest category of infrastructure worksites and drainage cleaning work undertaken on behalf of the local government. The civil society organizations should make them aware of the importance of legitimate and decent work and that it is their right to get decent work and enhance their own human resource value. These families can be absorbed more systematically in those services and covered under some provident fund like schemes. Such employability induction measures should be rights based, voluntary and facilitated through education and awareness. In this context it must be noted that immediate suspension of any kind of punitive action by the state over their current survival strategies like begging and hawking can be a great measure to help them tide over the CiL type of crisis, secure sustainable decent work and build resilience over the critical times like the CiL.

The foggy face of the virus

All cases show that there was widespread terror created by the ignorance about the virus except that it meant sure death, that there was no cure for it and that the vaccine will take long to arrive. The digital and educational divide seem to have played a decisive role in spreading the information required to protect oneself. The poor remained too deprived of the information that was essential to protect themselves. State departments responsible for the life and welfare of these communities together with the CSOs active in this field should evolve an emergency action plan which includes the provision of the authentic and available information and updates to them in order to facilitate rational health behavior and to reduce stress and anxiety.

Online education

Schools fulfilled multiple stated and unstated functions. Besides providing formal education they functioned as places of basic socialization of the child. Unintentionally they served as places taking care of the children for certain hours thereby enabling the adult members of the families the scope to go out for wage work. They decongested the physical pressure on the amenities back at home. They made toilets and playgrounds available to the children without any or an extra charge. Residential schools like ashram schools provided for most of the needs of the resident children. One day with the sudden declaration of the closure of schools and ashram schools the children including the resident were deprived of all these inputs. There was a checkered attempt at disbursing classroom-based sessions with Online classes. The digital divide played a very significant role here. The availability of smart phones, broadband, and data determined who would benefit from online classes and how much.

The children in the case studies remained left out of the online education. The experience of two years has shown that online education as it is dispensed today is not a substitute for the offline education. The socio-economic inequalities present in the inherent conditions will only get further accentuated due to the digital divide. Other than that, there is the danger of exposing the children to the online sources of danger and crime including pornography and other sexual offences.

The overall lack of experience in online education has presumably caused many blind spots in learning. Such gaps do not necessarily affect all the subjects in the curriculum but some subjects like science have incremental and cumulative learning and missing some parts in between can pose problems in understanding the portions of the next standards. This means in general support of remedial compensatory education is required to bring the students to the minimum level of subject matter understanding in order to resume at the higher levels. The children in the families under the Study more particularly require such support on priority bases.

To get vaccinated or not

The world was caught napping by the virus not just in terms of lack of scientific information about the nature of the virus but also by the deficit and fast declining credibility of the sources of information and knowledge. This was further compounded by the numerous conspiracy theories spreading like wild fire. Some of the theories wrote off the very existence of the virus from the very beginning. Such deviation from science and secular information took a larger toll on those who had no means to scrutinize multiple versions of the disaster and decide what is the best course of action for them.

When the vaccine did arrive, it was in short supply and the underprivileged and underserved populations remained the last ones to get the shot if at all they did. The technologically disadvantaged communities remained deprived of the vaccine and those who were gripped by some or the other superstition did not make any efforts to get vaccinated by consciously opposing it or by simply undermining the importance of it. The families under the study represent all these types.

Often it is seen that the social protection measures undertaken by the state are unusable for the intended targeted groups of beneficiaries as they are incomplete and devoid of some important elements. Just as the waiving of tuition fees or provision of free books and note books is not enough to attract girl children to enroll and stay in formal education, the mere announcement of a free shot is not enough for the poor wage laborers and daily wage earners to queue up at a public health facility. Besides the drudgery of availing any state sponsored benefits administered through an insensitive bureaucracy the wage earners face yet another problem. They have to be compensated for the loss of wages for the days spent in getting the vaccine and for the recovery day after the shot.

Access to basic amenities for hygiene to maintain the minimum standards of human dignity

The stories of most of the families also exhibit the horrific situation of lack of amenities and resources to maintain basic hygiene. The access to toilets, bathing places, and water and the costs thereof are a big drag on their fragile household economies.

While the public toilets (most of which are privately owned and run against a charge per use) suspended charging these families for some time the facility was withdrawn at the first available opportunity. The families under the study have been living in horrible unhygienic conditions hereby inviting various health problems. Public toilets including bathing places and water must be made freely available to such homeless communities as a fundamental right. There is no reason to believe that any one can overuse such services or hoard them.

Using private medical facilities as against public

Ironically, many families under the study have been found accessing the private medical services instead of the public. It is not because they have higher disposable income or are covered under a medical insurance scheme. The factors behind this behavior is quite different. There is a lot written and spoken about the difficulties in accessing public health services and benefits. Besides the humiliation and drudgery, the days wasted in accessing such services are an important factor. Few of these families can afford to forgo their wage for the day in order to use the public dispensaries. The private health sector adapts to this reality and adjusts its services accordingly, while the public health sector remains rigid and unsuitable thereby forcing the marginalized people to use private medical services. The Primary health care services should adopt patient/ user friendly practices. They should operate at the community level on certain publicly made known morning and evening hours that don't clash with the normal working hours of the earning members of the community, this can go a long way in making the public health services more suitable and accessed for the intended beneficiaries.

Cultural determinants of health behaviour

It is a type of primordial behavior of human beings to deify the living and non-living forces that either pose insurmountable danger or protect life and grant favors. In the hierarchy of sacredness some usually worshipped by the higher strata of society are human reincarnations of God while the lower strata deify lesser deities, animals and objects of worshipping. In India the tribals are found worshipping snakes and tigers. They also worship rain and fire. Among the smaller deities they have the deity of epidemics the Mari-Amma known in western India by the name Mari-aai. It is believed that her ire causes epidemics and pandemics and pleasing her is the way to protect oneself against the epidemic. Every new epidemic was interpreted in this form. Worshipping Mari-aai is thus an integral part of the culture and belief system of the marginalized communities. Hence after cholera and small pox the latest version of Mari-aai was AIDS-amma that was worshipped when HIV/AIDS hit India. There were reports of new temples of AIDS-Amma coming up in parts of the country. On the same lines in 2019-2020 there were reports of temples of Corona-Amma (also called as Karuna-Amma) built in some villages.

A few families under this study attributed the outbreak of Corona to the displeasure of Corona-devi or Karuna-Amma and believed that seeking her grace and not adopting any other secular measures especially those from medical sciences like vaccination was essential to get her grace. This is a very important area that explains what factors would decide the kind of health related behavior and health related decision making on the part of the communities.

While the success of war on the pandemic depends upon the health behavior of the masses including their participation in mass vaccination drives the factors which determine this participation are cultural in nature and must be taken into consideration if the public health goals have to be accomplished.

Mental health

One thing that comes out straight from the study is that there is an urgent need to timely provide adequate and verified information pertaining to the Covid-19 virus and its variants, updated government announcements on the measures to tackle the pandemic such as lockdown etc. the broader nature of the social political situation affecting private and public life (here the pandemic, restrictions on mobility, close down etc.), preventive and remedial care to be taken (here washing hands, social distancing, using mask, accessing nearby public health facilities etc.) clarifications on rumors (widespread incorrect and misleading information), services and resources available (hospitalization, treatment, isolation, quarantining medicines, and vaccination etc.), suspended liabilities (e.g. payment of electricity bills, etc.). Such a provision can go a long way in preventing and alleviating considerable stress, anxiety and uncertainty.

Provision of psycho education in a creative manner is strongly recommended. Similarly, creation of sustainable, affordable human resources such as barefoot counsellors, or better, specialized social case workers is highly recommended in order to intervene in the community mental health arena.

Violence against women and children

Although domestic violence was not observed or reported universally and uniformly in the 10 cases it was mentioned in some cases.

It was against the women and children of the family. No special incidence of violence from extra domestic sources was reported by the respondents (except of course the police brutalities). No local/ neighborhood-based mechanism traditional institutionalized or professional, was found operating or provided by the state or the civil society sector to alleviate the consequences of domestic violence or violence. This primarily suggests two provisions, one preventive and second, remedial. The precondition to these services is the timely and objective identification of domestic and extra domestic violence. This can be done through extensive outreach.

After identification a remedial intervention is recommended. This could be provided by the state and civil society agencies. It could be along the lines of or similar to One Stop Crisis Centers (OSCC) where short term shelter is immediately available without much formalities. These measures should not wait for the victims to approach them on their own. These measures should undertake extensive outreach themselves. Any such intervention addressing domestic violence needs to provide other services such as nutrition, medical help, counseling, legal counseling on urgent basis. Some of this help can be in the nature of mobile units or visiting para professionals/professionals.



A N N E X U R E S

Interview Guidelines for the Case Study Research

As per the proposal, this research document would collate the experiences of 10 families during Covid-19 induced pandemic. The document would focus on traumatizing experience of eviction and its impact on the families, their income and the safety, education, development and wellbeing of children during the pandemic, health status of the children and family members, status of provisioning, availability of resource material, status of children's education etc. Unlike a structured interview schedule the tool employed here was merely a flexible guideline for an unstructured interview.

Objectives:

- To study the most apparent impact of COVID-19 induced Lockdown /pandemic on the daily lives of the families whose children are found begging and rescued from begging.
- To study the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the health, and daily lives of the families whose children are found begging and rescued from begging.
- To study the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the daily lives of the families whose children are found begging and rescued from begging.
- To study the pattern of reverse migration and relocation among the families after the announcement of the lockdown in 2020.
- To study the effect of eviction among these families during the pandemic.
- To study the nature of support systems, and social provisioning available for these families, and their accessibility of the same.
- To identify and document the relief services availed by them and the source of relief providers.
- To study the impact of the COVID-imposed-Lockdown (CiL) on the education of the children and identify their concerns in doing online mode of studies.
- To study the impact CiL has made on the earnings and indebtedness of these families.
- To gather suggestions from the respondents that can help us devise ways to help them deal with their problems of day to day living precipitated by CiL.

Interview Guideline

(These were guidelines and not pointed questions seeking a precise short response.)

1) Name of the -Respondent -or the file no:

A. Migration, Relocation and Eviction:

Where are you currently living :

For how many years/months/days have you lived here?

Have you recently been relocated to this place? If yes, can you tell us from where and how many days back have you relocated? Tell us more about it.

Have you faced any eviction since the last lockdown was imposed in 2020? If yes, how many times? Do you know who evicted you? Where did you go after you got evicted? Tell us more about it. Have you been to your native since the lockdown was imposed last year? If yes, how long did you stay there? When did you come back? Do have any plan to visit your native anytime soon? How did you manage your source of income while you were in the village? Tell us more about it.

B. Status of Children:

How many child(ren) do you have (mention their age and gender)? Where is/are this/these child(ren) now? Tell us more about it.

If the child(ren) is/are not with you, when was the last time you meet/call his/her/them? Tell us more about it.

If you haven't met your child(ren) for the past three months, would you like to share about your feelings being away from your children? How often do you talk to them? What is your plan regarding meeting your child(ren)? Have you spoken to your child(ren) about this? Tell us more about it.

If you talk to you your child(ren) over phone calls what are the things that you generally talk about? Tell us more about it.

Is/are your child(ren) enrolled to school? Is (s)he attending his/her online classes? Can you please tell us what do you feel about it? Do you have any concern regarding the education of your child(ren) currently? What are your concerns? Tell us more about it.

If your child(ren) stays at home does/do your child(ren) go to play outside? If no, how long they haven't been out to play? If yes, do they wear masks? Do you know if they follow the safety rules imposed by Govt. while playing? What is their current recreation? Tell us more about it.

C. Current Status of Physical Health and Health related Information:

Have you heard of any cases of COVID 19 where you live? Tell us more about it.

How has Covid affected the families living in your neighbourhood??? (Any deaths, hospitalisation, income etc) Tell us more about it.

Are you or any of your family members currently facing any health issues? Can you let us know a brief about it?

Have you or any of your family members got vaccinated for COVID? **If yes**, how many doses have you received so far? From where? Do you have any document regarding this? How did you get to know about the vaccination?

If no, have you heard of the vaccination for COVID-19? Has anybody talked to you about this? Do you know which are the documents required for having the vaccination? Are you or any of your family members planning to get vaccinated any time soon? Tell us more about it.

Did you get any information on the current COVID 19 crisis? What do you know about it? Who gave you the information? Do you adhere to the rules provided by Govt. to stay safe during this pandemic? Tell us more about it.

D. Current Financial Status:

Who is/are the earning member(s) of your family? What is/are his/her/their current employment status? Is that income sufficient for your family's livelihood? Tell us more about it.

Have you borrowed any money since the lockdown was imposed last year? If yes, can you please tell us a brief about it (from whom, the amount, reason for borrowing etc.)? Could you clear your debt? Tell us more about it.

E. Status of Identity Documents and Entitlement Documents:

What identity documents you and your family members have? Are these documents currently with you? Tell us more about it.

Do you have any Bank Account? If yes, was this Bank account opened under Jan Dhan Yojana? Tell us more about it.

F. Status of Provision Received Since Lockdown:

Since the lockdown did you receive any relief material? If yes, what have you received so far? Do you know who all distributed that relief materials? When did you receive relief material for the last time? Tell us more about it.

Do you have enough ration which will suffice for a month? If no, how long do you think it will suffice?

Do you require ration or any other support? If yes, can you please tell us what do you require currently?

How many meals did you and your family members have during the lockdown? How many meals do you all have in normal circumstances? Have your food habits changed during the lockdown? Tell us more about it.

G. Access to Basic Amenities:

How do you cook? If you use gas to cook is it under Ujjwala Yojana? Do you have cooking fuel? How long will it suffice? How do you procure it? How much do you pay for it?

Which toilet do you use? Do you pay for using a toilet? Do you have toilets at home, if no, are there toilet blocks in the community, if no what is the alternative that you and your family use? Tell us more about it.

Do you own mobile phone(s)? Any other members in the family who have mobile phone? Tell us more about it.

H. Effects of Lockdown as mentioned by the Respondents

What is your support system in the village / whom do you get in touch with when in need / when in crisis?

How do you think the lockdown has affected your family? Tell us more about it.

What were your worries when govt-imposed restrictions during the pandemic? Is there anything that you value about this situation? If yes, can you tell us briefly about it?

I. Mental Health:

(Very Sensitive, to be explored with utmost caution and sensitivity)

Has the CiL caused any changes in the family's home environment? If yes, what kind of changes have you experienced? - Suggestive questions: Has there been disputes between the members of the family? Has there been physical fights between the family members? Has there been a supportive environment at home?

Have you observed a surge of substance abuse (e.g. alcohol, bidi, cigarette, gutkha, etc) in any of your family members during the lockdown? If yes, which substance and how has it impacted the family's wellbeing?

Did you observe any individual in your family to be sad, hopeless, extremely scared, feeling helpless, irritable during the eviction or lockdown? If yes, will you be comfortable sharing the experience? Tell us more about it.

Has there been any incidence in the family, where a member has thought/ verbalised about harming themselves or others? Has anyone in the family hurt oneself or others out of rage and sadness during the CiL? If yes, would you be willing to share about it in brief?

Has/Have the child(ren) in the family expressed their challenges to you? Suggestive questions: Has the child expressed feeling angry, confused, bored, sad, hopeless during the CiL? If yes, did you help the child with these challenges and how?

Has/Have the child(ren) indulged in any risky behaviour during the CiL. like running away from home, getting involved in fights outside home, not using masks or violating COVID protocols, playing with things that could cause harm (Fire, chemical etc)? If yes, help us understand the things you did to stop it.

Consent Form for Participants

I volunteer to participate in the case study research conducted by Prerana. I understand that the study is designed to gather the experiences of the families during COVID-19 pandemic. I will be one of approximately 8 to 10 people being interviewed for this research. I have received sufficient information about this research study and understand my role in it. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project and the future processing of my personal data has been explained to me and are is clear.

1. My participation as an interviewee in this project is completely voluntary. There is no explicit or implicit coercion whatsoever to participate.

2. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation in the interview.

3. Participation involves being interviewed by (a) researcher(s) from Prerana. The interview will last maximum 60 minutes. I allow the researcher(s) to take notes during the interview. I also allow the recording of the interview and subsequent dialogue by audio tape.

a) For Beneficiary Respondent - I understand that the audio recording made of this interview will be used only for analysis and that extracts from the interview, from which I would not be personally identified, may be used in any conference presentation, report or journal article developed as a result of the research.

b) Other than the Beneficiary Respondents (Persons in authority structure and other knowledgeable persons) I understand that the audio recording made of this interview will be used for analysis and final research report where I might get identified personally. The extracts from the interview may be used in any conference presentation, report or journal article developed as a result of the research.

I understand that no other use will be made of the recording without my written permission, and that no one outside the research team of Prerana will be allowed access to the original recording. It is clear to me that in case I do not want the interview and dialogue to be taped I am fully entitled to withdraw from my participation.

4. I have the right not to answer to questions. If I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to withdraw from the interview and ask that the data collected prior to the withdrawal will be deleted.

5. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.

6. I agree that my anonymized data will be kept for future research purposes such as publications related to this study after the completion of the study.

7. I have carefully read and fully understood the points and statements of this form/The interviewer has read and explained all the points in the form to me All my questions were answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

8. I am signing the consent form after understanding all the points mentioned above.

9. I obtained a copy of this consent form co-signed by the interviewer.

Signature of the Participant Date

Signature of the Researcher Date

