

IMPACT OF COVID -19 on PREM DAN MUMBAI

As of now in Mumbai city and suburban areas there are 249,111 reported cases of COVID-19 and 9,970 deaths. Life has changed drastically for people especially in the slums because many people have lost their jobs. . Schools came to a sudden halt on March 15th with no exams and a closure of all activities. From then on it has been most difficult for the poor people huddled together in one small room. While some IT and office people could work from home this was not possible for domestic workers and daily wage labourers who were not allowed to go to work for fear that they may be carriers. With the lockdowns the whole family had to remain at home even if they were huddled in one room, because of which domestic violence increased in the home and children were restless and irritable as they had no space to play or do anything.

At the **Garden school in Colaba**, food and other items were distributed to some of the families of the sponsored children and also to the teachers who would be affected by the lockdown restrictions.



In **Reay Road slum**, people were not allowed to go out except to use the public toilets. The houses of the people are in bad condition with no one allowed to do

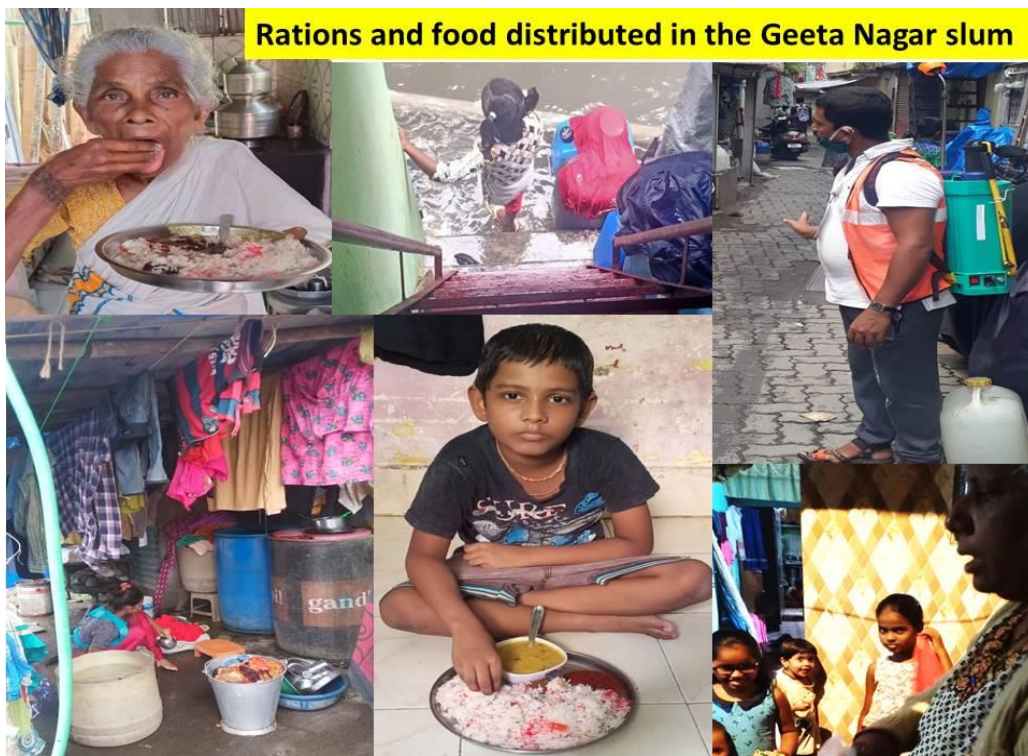
repair work. There was strong police security and if people ventured out of their houses they were badly beaten.



If people fall sick it is very difficult as the hospitals are full of all kinds of patients and they do not cater to the poor. Prem Dan as well as some other NGO's distributed rations and cooked food to the people in the Reay road slums.



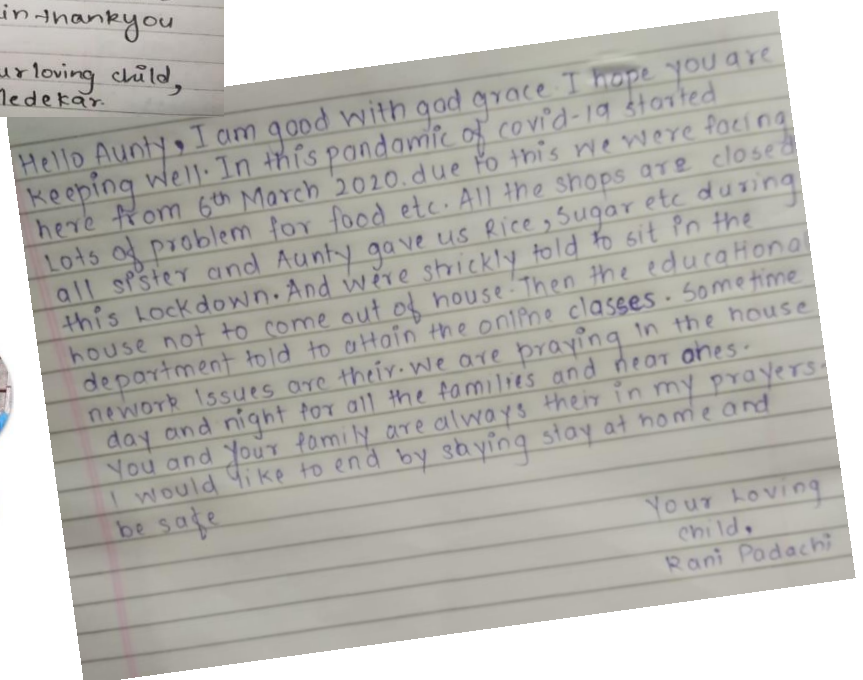
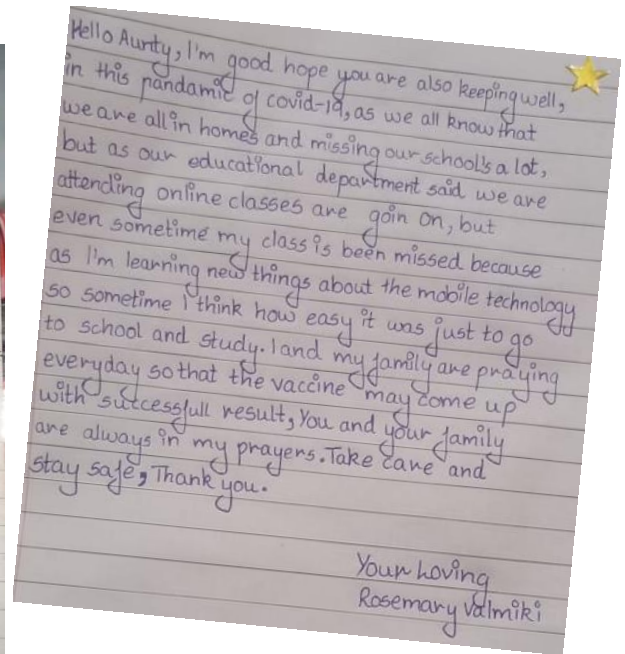
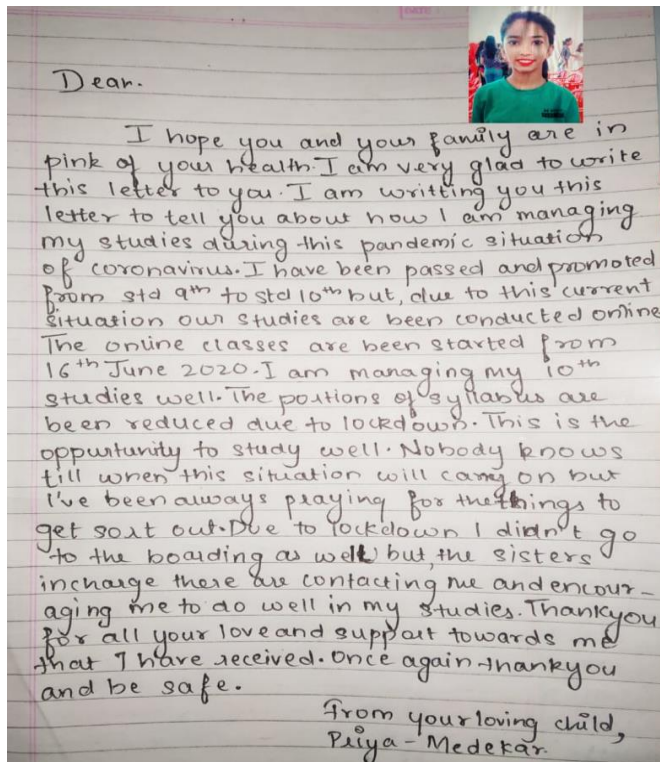
In the **Geeta Nagar slum** the situation is almost the same. People are unable to manage because they have lost their jobs. They do not have money to buy the essential things. They have to borrow money to pay their bills and fees. Their houses are in a bad condition and when it rains water comes into the houses. During the high tide sea water enters the houses. They are taking precautions and washing their hands but they are unable to buy sanitizers and other things. Premdan distributed food items and cooked meals to the families.



Garden school has not yet opened but the Premdan children who are in different schools have to attend the online teaching program. For our children in the slums it is very difficult as some families can have only one smart phone and 3 or 4 children have to use it for their classes. Since most of the parents in the slums are uneducated they are unable to help their children. Sometimes they have to manage everything in one room – cooking, cutting vegetables, studying and so on.

Some of the children had gone back to their villages so they have to try to follow the studies from there online. The teachers are taking care of things for their families.

In the Boarding at Kharghar the children had to be sent home because of social distancing norms and so they too are struggling in their homes. We hope and pray that things will get better and our children can come back to the boarding and attend school physically. Some of them have expressed their difficulties in their letters.



We know that you too are struggling in some way at this time of the pandemic and we send you and your families our wishes and prayers.

Sr. Helen Dias