

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CHILDREN OF PRISONERS



India Vision[™]
Foundation

#SaveTheNextVictim[™]

A SITUATIONAL AND NEED ANALYSIS

ABOUT US

India Vision Foundation is a voluntary non-profit, non-government organization registered as a Trust in India vide No. 4595 dated August 1, 1994. The foundation was born out of Ramon Magsaysay award (Equivalent to Asia's Nobel Peace Prize) conferred to Dr. Kiran Bedi, the first lady IPS (Indian Police Services) of India, for forging 'positive relationships' between people and police through creative leadership. Foundation aspires to contribute towards a crime free society by initiating reformation programs for prison inmates and reintegration opportunities to released inmates for the reduction in recidivism also facilitate welfare programs for their children to save them from becoming victims of their parental incarceration.

Foundation runs 5 programs across 5 states of India (New Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Maharashtra) namely:

Inside Prison Program



aims to reform inmates (male, female & youth) inside prison under its 3S (Shiksha - Education, Sanskar- Moral Education, Skills - Training & Development) Model of Reformation & therapeutic (Art, music, Dance) interventions along with life skill sessions, sports activities & festival celebrations.

Early Childhood Care & Development (ECCD) - The Creche inside Prison Programme



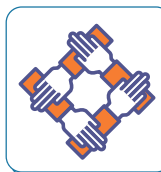
aims to engage with children of prison inmates who are less than 6 years of age by enrolling them in the inside prison day-care center, facilitate elementary education through a contextualized & standardized curriculum, in addition to providing them with nutritious food, health care & holistic development through play way methods

Children of Vulnerable Families Program (CVF)



aims to mainstream & educate the children of incarcerated families after the age of 6 years; ensure their all-around development through various interventions to help them accomplish their academic, social, emotional goals and save them from becoming a victim of their Parental Incarceration.

Reintegration & Rehabilitation Program



aims to enable the released inmates to put their life in prison behind themselves and embark on a journey that recognizes their talent, skills and self-respect to reduce chances of re-offending and help them reintegrate back into society.

Training for Prison Officials



aims to sensitize prison officials about prison reforms and help to standardize/sustain correctional programs and build their capacities on relevant issues to ensure their well being at work.

Today, India Vision Foundation is touching more than **3000** lives every day and is striving to give a new hope to prison inmates, their families/children and released inmates through positive reinforcement, education and values that not only help them to become responsible and conscientious citizens but empower them enough to become an asset to the society. The foundation has successfully reached out to more than **2, 60,000** beneficiaries under its Prison reforms and rural development program till date.

iProTRUST

Building Trust In Social Sector

Protiviti is a global consulting firm that helps companies solve problems in finance, technology, operations, data, analytics, governance, social impact, risk & internal audit. We function across 75 countries serving clients in different industry segments such as Auto, Banking, Insurance, Investment Companies, Telco, Manufacturing, Logistics, Healthcare, Pharma, Hospitality, Real Estate & Construction.

“Our three-flagship social sector global initiatives are:”



i on Hunger Programme

Through our global effort we have delivered more than 5 million meals to hungry people around the world through our initiative.



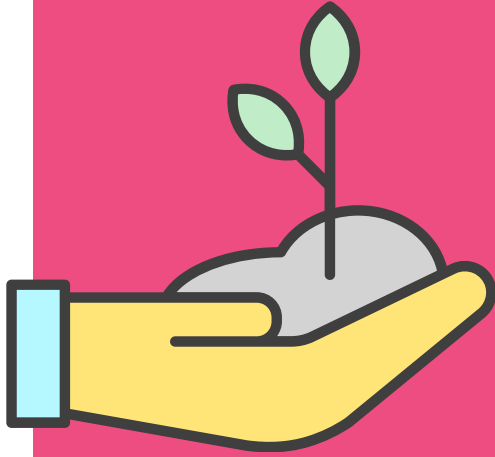
iCare

We are proud to support employees & their charities of choice through programmes.



The Protiviti Green Team

As we grow, we always have environmental impact as a priority in our decision making.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Coronavirus outbreak was declared as a 'public health emergency of international concern' by the World Health Organization (WHO) in January, 2020. The impact of the Corona virus pandemic is visible across all sections but its impact on the marginalized sections, especially the women and children has been immense. Amongst these severely affected groups are also the children of incarcerated parents. Protiviti India was contracted by the India Vision Foundation to design and conduct an impact assessment of the Covid-19 pandemic on a) children whose parents are currently in the prison and they are residing with their guardians b) children whose parents were in the prison at some point but are currently residing with them.

The genesis lay in an effort to understand the manifold repercussions the pandemic and the concomitant lockdown measures have had on this vulnerable community with an aim to streamline strategies and re-align programs to the beneficiaries' current needs. A situational and need based analysis was performed to ascertain the challenges faced by the group and map their current needs with prospective interventions.



OBJECTIVES & RESEARCH METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The overall objective of the impact study is to generate actionable information and draw insights to inform program design and improvement. We used a mixed-methods approach where we performed a qualitative and quantitative analysis on the data collected from different stakeholders. We divided our stakeholders into two sets – primary and secondary. The primary stakeholders are the children of prisoners and the secondary stakeholders are the experts and members of the community working on prisoner reformation and rehabilitation.

Various socio-psycho-economic factors were kept in mind while designing the survey questionnaires. We identified 3 broad categories to help assess the impact of the pandemic on the children of prisoners,

- Disruption in Education
- Emotional Well-Being
- Hygiene, Health and Nutrition standards.

To analyse and interpret the results, we chose to follow a descriptive, and graphical method. In some of the sections, we split the results according to certain natural classifications such as age, gender, conviction status, social categories, and income. The quantitative results are presented with a visual flair, followed by the qualitative analysis, in which we explore the underlying themes and testimonies of the stakeholders.

SAMPLING



- **Quantitative Analysis** - To ensure the sample size was large enough, we adopted a modified convenience sampling approach for the survey keeping the timelines and resource/stakeholder availability in consideration. The foundation had a database of 200 children of prisoners of which 90 were interviewed for the purpose of data collection. We further stratified our sample based on gender and of the 90 children of prisoners interviewed, 44 are male and 46 are female
- **Qualitative Analysis** - This included exploratory interviews with prominent secondary stakeholders/experts who are deeply involved in the domain of prisoner reformation and rehabilitation. While interviews with the primary stakeholders are critical to understand the situation on the ground, the secondary stakeholders help us to gain a policy and operational understanding of the impact which is imperative to acquire a more holistic perspective of the situation in order to design effective programs going forward. The qualitative data analysis complement and aid the interpretation of the quantitative findings. A total of 9 secondary stakeholders were interviewed as part of the qualitative data collection efforts, and they include academicians, policy makers, NGO heads, social workers, legal experts, psychologists and the prison officials.

DATA COLLECTION



In-depth survey questionnaires were prepared which were tailored to the different stakeholders identified for the study. For quantitative data collection, a survey questionnaire (google forms) was shared with Protiviti and India Vision Foundation field staff who administered the interviewees over a phone call. A sample size of 90 was reached out to after training the field team in data collection procedures. The teams were sensitized about the context and the background of our beneficiary group. All the qualitative interview conversations were recorded, transcribed and translated by the Protiviti team. These transcripts were then analyzed to draw inferences which helped enrich our understanding of the impact. Due to the restrictions imposed from the lockdown, all the interviews were conducted telephonically. Qualitative data collection took place concurrently with the quantitative data collection and both were completed in the duration of 10 days.

EDUCATION

DISRUPTED EDUCATION



Common difficulties faced by children:



- No or bad internet connectivity (61%),
- difficulty in enrolling in a school (43%),
- unavailability of smartphone/tablet (41%),
- difficulty to understand in virtual classes (37%).

Almost 1 out of every 3 children reported facing disruption in their education since the lockdown.

FAMILY INCOME HAS A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON EDUCATION



- 40% of the children with family monthly income over Rs.10,000,
- 58% of the children with family monthly income in the range of Rs. 7000 - 10000, and,
- 80% of the children with family monthly income less than Rs.7000.

“

The guardians of these children mostly work in the informal sector and the lockdown has severely affected their incomes. Guardians are unable to pay the school fees which is leading to an increase in the percentage of dropouts. Most children studying in schools have irregular or no online classes at all being conducted. Access to online education is difficult for them as they don't have facilities like mobile phones, laptops, internet connection, reading and writing materials, among other things.

”

MR. VIJAY RAGHAVAN FROM TISS

Recommendations



- As over 53% kids enrolled go to a government school with irregular online classes (82.8% reported disruption in learning), India Vision Foundation should prepare a customized curriculum for them to help bridge the gap. Online lessons and audio/video content can be shared with the children. They can then study at their own pace and virtual discussions online should take place to clarify queries and measure progress. Children who have poor or no internet connectivity can take these classes over the phone call.



- There are children who do not have access to laptops, smartphones and internet connections, hence sourcing and supplying them with second hand devices can be useful. Providing individual handsets should be very expensive, hence, resource pooling should be facilitated where children from similar neighbourhoods are identified and encouraged to study together on these devices. Digital Literacy training should also be provided.



- It is very essential to educate and inform the guardians about the importance of education for these children. A conducive home is important to facilitate active learning. Parents should be asked to keep a check on children's daily activities like time spent on social media, education, physical activity, household chores etc.



- 42% (38 out of 90) of the children are not currently enrolled in any school, continuous counselling should be provided and suitable institutions should be identified and contacted to get them enrolled as soon as possible



- 64% of the children reported a need for educational supplies such as textbooks, notebooks, stationary etc. IVF should make provisions for the same.

Career aspirations of the children

- The highest sought-after profession in our sample of CVF children is Public Service.
- Other professions CVF students aspire to most often are those in the fine arts, which includes becoming a painter, a dancer, a singer, etc, or being a Sports person, such as a cricketer, a footballer, and so on.



EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

**HIGH LEVELS OF STRESS, SADNESS,
AND ISOLATION**



The emotional state of mind, as self-reported by children, depict high levels of “stress” and “sadness”.



41% of the girls and 21% of the boys surveyed report feeling “stressed” since the lockdown.



30% of the girls surveyed and 12% of the boys surveyed report feeling “sad”

Almost half of all children surveyed reported feeling isolated at some point since the lockdown.

“

Children of prisoners have higher grade volatility. The absence of a parent sometimes forces these children to become the primary caretakers of their siblings and puts additional responsibility on these kids. Some become too mature before time having to take on familial responsibilities while others begin to demonstrate delinquent behavior patterns. Cases of abandonment, abuse and violence among these children has also been reported. Given the situation, in my understanding, the impact of COVID-19 on children of prisoners has been deep and devastating. ”

REENA JAISWAL, PRAYAS

Recommendations



- **Counselling** - Children are in a very vulnerable position when their parent is incarcerated. Feelings of isolation and distress are heightened. Regular counselling sessions by a psychologist/trained therapists should be conducted that will help children navigate through these times. Children should be given opportunities to talk about their feelings, ask questions about the legal process their parent is going through, and be included in planning re-entry activities so that they can have some control over the way the parent will be reintroduced into the family.



- **Mentorship** - These children need a person to speak with whom they can discuss and share their problems and aspirations. India Vision Foundation can tie up with organizations like the Lighthouse Project and Mentor Me, which are based on the model of pairing willing mentors with children from impoverished backgrounds. Mentors develop a one on relationship with the children and help them stay positive, motivated and inspired.



- **Support Groups** - Peer groups should be created and these can be instrumental for the purpose of both learning and therapy. A set of children should be identified who have similar interests and hobbies. They should be encouraged to practice their interests in music, dance, art & craft, writing, theatre, reading, cooking, storytelling etc. Bi-monthly virtual meet-ups should be conducted where they all are asked to talk/display/discuss their interest. They can also share photos and videos of their creativity on WhatsApp groups. On a quarterly basis, an expert can be asked to join in and give tips and help them stay motivated.

HEALTH, HYGIENE, NUTRITION

COMMENDABLE AWARENESS ABOUT PRECAUTIONS



- 87% of the respondents said they were aware about the Covid-19 pandemic and the precautionary measures necessary to curb the spread of the virus.



- 83% wore a mask when they stepped outside their home,



- 81% washed their hands after physical contact with other people and 72% considered their neighborhood acceptable to good in terms of community hygiene.

IMMUNITY AT RISK BECAUSE OF INADEQUATE NUTRITION, EXERCISE, AND SLEEP



The children are now **consuming less food and eating fewer meals (41%), exercising much less than before (58%), and sleeping a lot more (43%)** which is a pattern very counterproductive to good health.

“

Adolescent girls face additional issues as they don't have regular access to menstrual hygiene products during this period. Under usual circumstances, we would have provided these girls with menstrual products but due to lack of mobility and funding in this period, it has become very difficult to cater to this demand

”

Recommendations



- Pandemic related needs of the beneficiaries should be assessed and met. The top requirements by beneficiaries were **sanitizers (76), soaps (64), masks (70), sanitary napkins (33) and medicines (40)**.



- They should be provided with a **medical kit containing the necessary medical supplies and products**.



- Among girls, menstrual hygiene awareness needs to be provided to adolescent girls and **availability of sanitary napkins should be ensured**.



- Due to the lockdown, many people went through an acute shortage of ration and were unable to meet their family dietary requirements. These children are in their growing stages and a healthy nutritious wholesome meal is important for their cognitive and overall development. The top ask of the beneficiaries in regard to food supplies were, fruits(61), vegetables (56), grains/pulses (57). One should bring together the food industry, the government, corporates and NGOs in order to work out a model in which ration can be provided to these marginalized families during the time of pandemic.



Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of several organizations and stakeholders that helped to bring this impact assessment report to a successful completion.

This study could not have been brought to fruition without the unwavering support and consistent guidance from Ms. Monica Dhawan, Director, India Vision Foundation throughout the process.

Ms. Renu Nag and Ms. Jannat Fatima Farooqui from Learning & Development Vertical of India Vision Foundation were deeply involved in knowledge sharing, coordination and reviewing processes at every stage of the research.

We cannot miss the contributions of Mrs. Pearly Sanil, Head Program of Children of Vulnerable Families Project, India Vision Foundation and her dedicated team of professionals including Ms. Tulika Kiran, Mrs. Mannu Awasthi, Mrs. Vaishnavi Chaturvedi, Ms. Garima Dua, Ms. Nazia Naaz, Ms. Greeshma George and Ms. Pawan Khatana. The entire team was instrumental in tireless beneficiary data-collection during difficult times of Covid-19.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to every stakeholder interviewed during the data collection. Their inputs have proven to be insightful to assess the impact of Covid-19. Most importantly, we are thankful to children of prisoners for answering our survey questions with solemnity and patience. Their inputs and views were critical and laid the foundation for a rigorous quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Last but not the least, we are thankful to every team member from Protiviti who worked painstakingly on the impact assessment report, from project designing, data collection, analysis to the final report writing and presentation.

Contributors

VIJAY RAGHAVAN, PHD

Center for Criminology and Justice,
School of Social Work Tata Institute of
Social Sciences, Former Project
Director of Prayas.

DR. PINKY GOSWAMI

Practicing Psychologist
Clinic of Psychological Health Concern

SUNIL GUPTA

National Legal Services Authority
Retired Law Officer at Tihar Jail

REENA JAISWAL

Social Worker Prayas

Study Commissioned by



Published in - September 2020

Authors - Mannat Jaspal, Aliza Ali, Aditya Chhabra

Advisory Members - Mr. Puneet Gupta, Managing Director, Protiviti India

Mr. Ananay Jain, Project Manager, Protiviti India