The whole world is still in the middle of crisis of pandemic. They continue to feel apprehensive and insecure about the second wave, third wave etc. It has impacted the daily lives of the individuals, communities and countries in different ways. It has forced them to accept the ‘new normal’. It is causing death and economic losses to the informal workers, especially women.

Home based women workers suffered 30-40% reduction in income. Street vendors have again been severely affected due to the reduction in vending hours. The income of seamstress has been less than Rs.60/- (less than one USD) a day. Construction workers, diamond workers, textile workers and other daily wagers are getting almost no work due to lockdown. Access to Government security schemes is very low due to the inability to navigate Government schemes, resulting in loss of livelihood, food insecurity and increased debts.

MHT conducted a study in the slums across 9 cities, in 8 states to get data on the impact of Covid 19 on the families. Urban slums have been immersed in myths and rumours regarding vaccination. Access to basic medical resources like oximeters, thermometers, vitamin D, C, B- complex, masks, etc. is completely absent or sparing due to declining resources. Lack of referrals and information on availability of hospitals, testing and vaccination centres.

MHT organized awareness sessions and vaccination drives physically and digitally in the slums and villages in coordination with the local government. In this ‘response approach’, 6000 people were vaccinated. Women leaders start to identify their local issues and work towards getting appropriate solutions by approaching local administration where and when needed. Access, Awareness and Adapt strategy has been formulated with the support of women leaders to provide access to immediate needs of the community, equip them with relevant information to help them combat the health related social and economic effects of the pandemic. In the changed economic environment, manuals on various subjects pertaining to their needs have been developed to train and build the capacity of the women leaders.

- Lalita Krishnaswami
MHT’S OUTREACH:
MHT has reached out to more than 400,000 people from vulnerable urban communities to improve their habitat and quality of life for the past 25 years. 428 Community Action Groups (CAGs) have been reaching out relentlessly to the communities in a strong network of more than 15,000 grassroots leaders across 858 Community Based Organizations (CBO). Their efficient response to the crisis in partnership with multiple stakeholders have been invaluable.

Jodhpur:
Kaliberi identified three families. She says, “Guddi and Ramesh Bheel lives with their three children. Guddi collects fodder for cows and earns around INR. 1650 per month. Her husband is physically challenged and not able to contribute to family’s income.” She says, “Janki Devi, 85, a widow, has a handicapped son. Her monthly pension helps her buy essentials. The third family, Gudi and Bhawarlal live with their three grandchildren and are supported by a relative- a construction worker, who himself struggled because of no-work days during lockdown.” She linked them to MHT, who provided ration for one month.

Nuri Mehram, a member of the Community Action Group (CAG), cooked meals for the vulnerable families initially and delivered to them, on their doorstep. She approached Jodhpur Nagar Nigam to link these families with the Indira Rasoi scheme. But this was not enough. She listed these families with MHT for food ration kits.

Delhi
Zarinaben identified Reshmiben, a daily wage earner, who had lost her work during lockdown. Reshmiben, a mother of five daughters, wife to an alcoholic and abusive husband who couldn’t step out to work to manage the meals for six of them. She was infected by the COVID-19 virus and the savings almost got exhausted. The neighbours chose not to interact with the family in fear to get infected themselves leaving the family in struggle. MHT Delhi took over to support by providing food ration, medical resources and details of Covid-19 behaviour when one in the family is infected.

Bhopal:
MHT lists most vulnerable families to compensate their loss of livelihood and ensure their food security. In one such food ration support drive organized in Kanhasaiya, Bhopal, three needy families shared a portion of their ration with one of the community member - Susheela Lodhi, who was in dire need.

SHELTER AND HOUSING
Affordable Housing Program Mission, Gujarat Government invited MHT to conduct a social audit of 30,206 households to scrutinize the benefits of Pradhan Mmantri Awass Yojna (PMAY) scheme. Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MoHUPA) identifies the relevance of the mission from the point of view of the beneficiaries and stakeholders to understand social impact of the mission. The CAG women-leaders have been trained and equipped to conduct the social audit in Gujarat as well as other states. They are the mechanism of the Third-Party Quality Monitoring Agencies (TPQMA).

WATSAN
MHT KEY - LINKING WITH SERVICE DELIVERY
MHT has been working along with the community led by Community Action Group (CAG) members, for urban development for their communities in Lucknow.

A one-day campaign on sustainable solid waste management was designed to sensitize not only the leaders but also the community members regarding the effect of dumping waste in the open, and thereby causing diseases. But there were challenges! The stakeholders including community members, neighbouring railway colony and Lucknow Municipal Corporation (LMC) were resistant to participate in the campaign.

MHT members took up the cleaning and provided dust bins, brochures and persuaded the community to join in this campaign. It happened in one day what did not happen in 35 years!

The LMC committed to clean the area and the open drainages and provide cleaning services regularly. The municipal corporation also committed to installed a large garbage container in the dumping site. The garbage is collected by the van.

Each house hold was provided with two garbage cans for the wet and dry garbage. The responsibility for implementation was taken by the CAG members. The railway colony neighbourhood are now with the community for this campaign.

In addition, the municipal councillor took over to develop the dumping ground into green area!

This could be possible only with the support of HCL Foundation.

It is a sustainable beyond MHT’s intervention. It has generated awareness as to the role played by Lucknow Municipal Corporation.

Mr. S. P. Miishra, Supervisor, Health Department, LMC said, “With the valuable intervention of MHT in collaboration with LMC, this area will be clean and green.”
**CAPACITY BUILDING**

**Media workshop**

A media workshop for Vikasinis (women-leaders) as a part of Communications training was held in Ahmedabad. Ms. Lakshmi Patel, Senior Journalist, Gujarat Exclusive and Mr. Jignesh Parmar, Senior Assistant Editor, Ahmedabad Mirror conducted the workshop. The objective was to introduce critical thinking about media to women leaders from slum communities.

- To enable them to solve their civic issues
- To understand media as a source of information and medium of communication to participate in the governance processes
- Draft press-note, newspaper articles and coverage of events towards sustainable urban development
- Identify media worthy issues, track information and becoming news themselves!

**CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE**

Monsoon preparedness and water management, in Ahmedabad and Ranchi

**Ahmedabad**

Radhikaben Pandey, a CAG member, Vrundavan Park, Vastral ward shares, “Ours is low-lying area, where water rushes into our homes causing water logging, loss of documents, damage to groceries due to continuous rainfall is usual.” She approached Drainage Project Department at Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) in advance of the monsoon to clean the individual home-drainage pipes of 300 homes in her society to avoid water clogging this year.

In Bhagwatinagar, Deepikaben Malek, a CAG member and water-management leader in her area. She approached the Drainage Project Department at AMC to desilt the sewer-lines before the rainy season and cleaning to be done through sewer jet machine, which removes obstruction mud and other material from the drains. Past experience indicated that just cleaning with iron rods removes the clog temporarily. The internal drains in her area are made of mud and the situation gets worst in the monsoon.

The women leaders have now started to identify their local issues and apt solutions for the same by approaching local administration, when need be, is commendable.

**Ranchi**

The Anjali Mahila Mandal CAG in Lohra Kocha Tharpakna, Ranchi worked towards Monsoon preparedness and water management by urging permanent covering of open drains on roads and reviving a community well to enable continuous supply of water.

It urged C P Singh, Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) to support them in reviving a community well which was damaged and stores water for not more than 1.5 feet. They requested to cover the open drains with RCC slabs to prevent the dirty water from mixing with the rain water, which flows into the well.

The CAG got the well repaired and dug upto 70 feet and expects that the water will get collected in the well during the rainy season. This would be a water resource for the community. A parapet wall of 5 feet was constructed to avoid casualties.

Women collectives leading slum upgradation assures as long-term solution enabling community participation.

**TECHNOLOGY**

**MHT Samvad App - dialogue**

Digital Technologies for Participatory governance and planning

A workshop was organized to introduce MHT Samvad app to the grassroot leaders, government officials and elected representatives in Ahmedabad. MHT Samvad app was developed to enable them to exchange information, address their problems, delivery of services and raise issues. This is an enabling app to make the governance process more effective and easier for the grassroot women.

Bindiya Patel, Programme Manager said, “In today’s environment, technology plays a vital role in communication. Community women leaders not only engage in data collection, paper work but also are equipped with skills to use technology.”
MEDIA
Citizens for Shelter Alliance Ahmedabad (CISHAA), a network of civil society organisations in Ahmedabad supported MHT to distribute tarpaulin sheets and food ration kits to homeless families to ensure food-security and monsoon preparedness.

AWARDS and RECOGNITIONS
In June 2021, MHT was finalized by World Resource Institute (WRI) ROSS Center, Prize For Cities for women’s action towards Climate Resilience for the urban poor.

Rachana Sharma, Programme Coordinator, Jaipur was felicitated by Mr. Avdhesh Meena, Commissioner, Nagar Nigam Jaipur Heritage for MHT Jaipur team’s contribution towards Swachh Survekshan - an annual survey of cleanliness, hygiene and sanitation in cities and towns across India, launched as a part of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.