

# THE DISCOURSE

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Image Courtesy : Ravi Choudhary/PTI



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# EDITORIAL

**Deepanwita De**

**Manager, Communication  
INDIAdonates**

I am happy to present before you the fourth edition of our quarterly newsletter 'The Discourse'. The colossal damage due to the COVID-19 pandemic is growing manifold. While it is primarily viewed as a health hazard, the collateral damage it is causing worldwide is massive. One significant area is the loss of livelihood across different strata of societies. Although the pandemic does not distinguish between people, its accompanying effects are tremendously skewed against the most marginalized communities. While the positives of this year includes the gigantic task of mass inoculation, we are again sinking deep into the second wave of the pandemic, with authorities struggling to come out with a clear strategy to contain the spread.

What we see and hear about unemployment is just the tip of the iceberg. According to the new report by PEW Research Center<sup>[1]</sup> (think-tank), the pandemic has pushed multitudes in India towards poverty, undoing years of hard work. You will be able to read more about it in our cover story. Meanwhile, the United Nations declared 2021 as the 'International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development' and the 'International Year of Peace and Trust'.

This quarter, INDIAdonates also focused on promoting sustainable livelihood, through its implementing partners in both urban and rural areas, focusing on marginal communities like tribals and victims of domestic violence. In the run-up to International Women's Day, INDIAdonates took part in the #choosetochallenge worldwide photo challenge, where women from different walks of life shared the prejudices they faced in their day-to-day life. In addition to this, as part of 'Let's Talk' series we conducted a deep and insightful discussion with women's rights activist Ms. Kamla Bhasin. We also conducted a capacity building workshop on proposal writing for individual fundraising to equip our partner NGOs and an enriching webinar focusing on new age education in collaboration with Bharti Foundation, BIMTECH University, and BYJU'S.

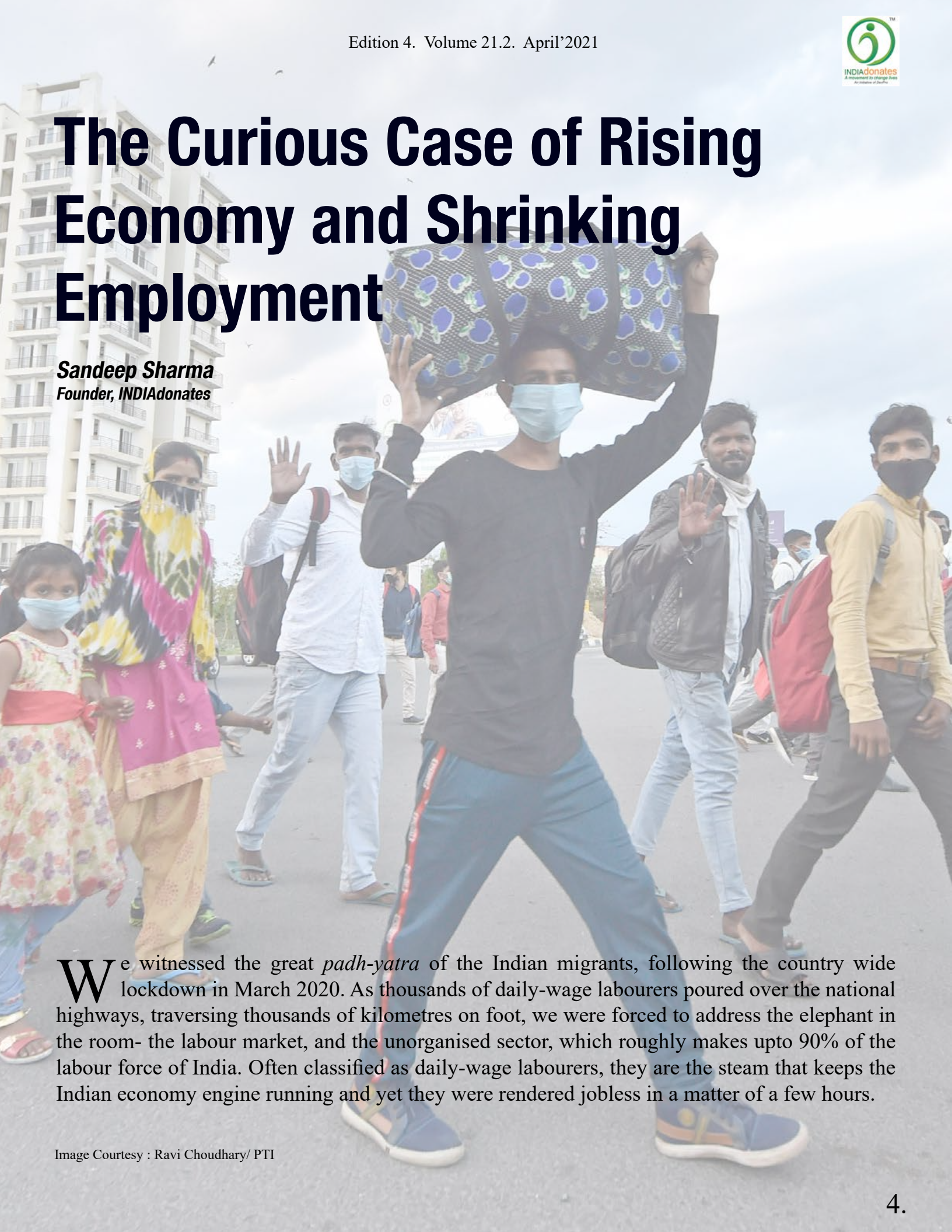
This quarter, we also launched a very exciting initiative 'Sustaining to Sustain- Building Centres of Excellence', a flagship program to build fundraising capacities for a cohort of 10 organisations spread across different parts of India. While we look forward to kick-starting the 'Centre of Excellence' program, more details will follow in the next edition.

<sup>[1]</sup> <https://pewrsr.ch/3n8usrO>



# The Curious Case of Rising Economy and Shrinking Employment

**Sandeep Sharma**  
Founder, INDIA donates



We witnessed the great *padh-yatra* of the Indian migrants, following the country wide lockdown in March 2020. As thousands of daily-wage labourers poured over the national highways, traversing thousands of kilometres on foot, we were forced to address the elephant in the room- the labour market, and the unorganised sector, which roughly makes upto 90% of the labour force of India. Often classified as daily-wage labourers, they are the steam that keeps the Indian economy engine running and yet they were rendered jobless in a matter of a few hours.

Image Courtesy : Ravi Choudhary/ PTI





Understanding the economics of employment is a task ridden with variable data points, research, charts, and a comprehensive study of how labour forces work and contribute to the larger economy. The varied nature and layers of labour/sectors/businesses make it a complex labyrinth, unlikely to be understood without the knowledge of the employment machinery. Speaking of these data points, the existing reports that were published to understand the impact of COVID-19 lockdown on employment looks satisfactory to the naked eye. Our quarterly Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Quarter 3, **October-December quarter 2020** grew by **0.4 per cent** which had very recently contracted by a huge margin. It needs to be noted that while calculating the quarterly GDP, the National Statistical Office (NSO) only uses data from the organized sector to measure growth in the unorganized sector also.[i]

With the mass inoculation campaign catching pace, we might be predisposed to believe that the worst is behind us, both in terms of the emerging recession and the pandemic. However that might not be the case. We are in midst of the second wave, and the collateral damages created by the pandemic are unlikely to dissipate both in the labour market and larger economy. We are inching closer to a titanic battle with an unseen unemployment trend. And here's what other reports point at, "Nearly one year after the lockdown, in February 2021, employment was down by seven million of what it was in February 2020," according to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy Pvt Ltd report.[ii]





Image Courtesy : Ravi Choudhary/ PTI

“The loss in non-farm jobs is much higher between February 2020 and February 2021 and is of the order of 11.6 million.” According to the report, this job loss is spread equally among business, salaried and daily wage earners.

While this was a direct implication of the immediate lockdown, the Industrial Revolution 4.0 is playing a huge role in automation. As companies move towards robotics, and Artificial Intelligence, it would reduce dependency on human interference and would require up-skilling of employable individuals. India adds a whopping 12 million working population each year, and the working-age population is expected to increase from 61% in 2011 to 65% in 2036. Therefore, it is imperative to take the emerging employment trend seriously. Gainful work leads to a better life, access to health facilities, education, enhanced decision-making power, and is one of the most powerful tools to eliminate poverty.

As job losses become pervasive, and the market becomes volatile, absence of regulation in the unorganized sector can worsen the situations, if there is another injection of fresh lockdown. At a macro level, policy revision and opening up of better jobs markets is the most sought after answer. But we need to take a harder look at how we (individuals, businesses, voluntary sector) can create sustainable skill-based employment in the unorganized sector. The Financial Budget 2021 mentions the creation of a portal to collect information on gig workers, and construction workers, to help frame social benefit schemes for migrant unorganised workers. This would, for the first time since independence, give us a micro insight on the girth of the unorganised sector. Inarguably, this is the first step towards holistic reformation. But who can be the key players to bring change?



Corporates and NGOs need to relook at the work that they are doing and to what extent they can internalize skill-based training and create market linkages to mitigate this problem. When it comes to Corporate Giving, the major focus is still on primary education and health. There is no denying that these causes deserve support because the abyss is equally deep in these areas. But we also need to understand that education, employment, poverty and health are closely interlinked. Marginalized and poor communities that do not have a steady source of income are less likely to have access to education or health. Similarly, illiteracy can lower income generation or decision making power. However, this line can be redrawn and eliminated, following a dual approach to promote education that can stimulate sustainable livelihood.

Under-employment has the potential to become the next pandemic if we don't take these red flags seriously. An action-driven plan to upskill the unorganized sector needs to be our foremost focus. NGOs need to gear up with fresh, innovative and sustainable ideas of income-generation. While emerging data will tell us a new story every time, the trend on the ground is what we need to observe and act on.



Image Courtesy : Ravi Choudhary/ PTI

[i] <https://www.businessday.in/current/economy-politics/recession-reality-check-do-quarterly-gdp-other-indicators-reflect-true-state-economy/story/391579.html>  
 [ii] <https://www.cmie.com/kommon/bin/sr.php?kall=warticle&dt=2021-03-29%2015:17:23&msec=263>



# What We Did ?

## From Primary Caregivers to Entrepreneurs- Ensuring Opportunity and Inclusion



Caregivers' economic vulnerability is one of the unseen aspects of 'disability'. The absence of alternative institutional facilities and larger societal expectations often put caregivers, (primarily mothers) in a vulnerable position. According to a report by UNESCO, 1.7% of India's child population in India are differently-abled, thus, making them wholly dependent on their caregivers.

The need to devote most of their time to their children is the major deterrent in gaining financial stability for caregivers. To help these mothers navigate through their livelihood challenges, our NGO partner EKTA is running a program to ensure employment opportunities to 40 primary caregivers of children with disability. These 40 women will be producing and packaging Multi-grain Powder, Ragi Powder and powdered spices through local markets and online retail stores. It will fetch them a monthly profit of Rs 6000.

Click [here](#) to read more





# Rebuild the Lives of Domestic Violence Survivors through Employment

Our NGO Partner, Bihar Voluntary Health Association (BVHA) has been working with survivors of domestic violence for almost 20 years by providing counselling sessions. However, with the ongoing pandemic, and the rising cases of domestic violence in the urban slums of Patna, BVHA realised the need to impart skill development training to the survivors of domestic violence. This would provide the survivors an opportunity to enhance their income, decision-making power and help them gain control of their lives.



BVHA will work with 30 such survivors of domestic violence from 5 urban slums of Patna. They will receive skill development training on sewing, embroidery and other skills related to making, mending and beautifying clothes to gain financial security. At the end of the training program, every woman will be provided with a sewing machine to make and mend clothes from their homes. Additionally, the women will receive an intensive 5 day workshop on Financial Literacy, Entrepreneurship, Book-keeping and building a small business. Click [here](#) to read more





# Bridging the Digital Divide for Livelihood of Youth

Babu\* is an educated youth residing in the rural area of Diamond Harbour, but despite his degree and best efforts, he failed to obtain a job. Like Babu, there are many youth in the area who are unable to get employment in the competitive job market.

Lack of relevant job-oriented skills are getting the rural youth stuck in the unorganized sector. To address this gap, (from education to employment), our partner NGO Kankura Masat Social Welfare Society (KMSWS) plans to train 100 such local youth (between the age group of 18 to 21) on basic computer skills through the online learning platform, 'Udemy'. Unemployment and income instability are the biggest challenges in the South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal.



In keeping with the relevant trends within the job-market and to optimally use new and emerging technology, the curriculum will incorporate modules on basics of computer (desktop and IT support), Microsoft Office, Financial Accounting with Tally ERP and GST, Windows 10 Troubleshooting as well as knowledge of how to fix Wi-Fi, Computer Hardware, Networking Problems etc. This will help these 100 youth secure salaried jobs with a monthly income of Rs. 9000 to 12000 in banking, insurance, retail stores, local small business, data entry jobs etc. Click [here](#) to read more



# Gyan Setu: Ensuring Primary Education for 120 kids through Community Learning Centres



Attendance irregularity and drop-out rates are extremely high in the local government Primary Schools of Paratajpur, Deehpure Birbal and Adilpur of block Harringtoganj, Ayodhya. Countless students need special attention for their education. The teachers at the village primary schools do not have the time or inclination to pay special attention to them. The parents, mostly illiterate and daily wage labourers, are unable to guide their children's learning processes.

To address this education gap, our NGO partner, Supporting Association for Thematic and Holistic Initiatives (SATHI) is working with local women leaders to provide primary level education to 120 children within the age bracket of 5 to 12 years, in three villages in Harrington Ganj Block, under the 'Gyan Setu' Project. The project aims to give education using exciting, interactive methods in the local language. At the end of the program, the children will be re-integrated into the mainstream education system.

Click [here](#) to read more





## EVENTS HUB

We believe in community partnerships and building a strong network of relationships.

### Towards an Inclusive Education Environment Post Covid

INDIAdonates in collaboration with Bharti Foundation, BIMTECH University and BYJU'S conducted a webinar titled 'Towards an Inclusive Education Environment Post Covid' on the occasion of International Day of Education (24 January). The aim of the webinar was to provide a holistic perspective on the multi-faceted nature of education in India, the strides education has made during COVID-19, the rural-urban divide in terms of access to education and a look at India's New Education Policy. Our distinguished group of panelists included Ms. Mamta Saikia (CEO, Bharti Foundation), Dr. Rahul Singh (Professor- Strategy and Globalization, BIMTECH), Dr. Aishwarya Mahajan (Director- Livelihood Education, Aide et Alliance) Mr. Kaustabh Khade (AVP, BYJU's) and was moderated by INDIAdonates Founder, Mr. Sandeep Sharma.



### Effective Communication for Social Impact

INDIAdonates conducted its capacity building workshop on 9-10th March. The workshop led by Fundraising Specialist, Ms. Amita Puri was conducted for over 30 NGO partners. The module covered How to Draft an Impact Proposal, Components to Quantify the Output, Need for Need Assessment, and Report-back Mechanism (Best standard and Practices).





## LET'S TALK

(An INDIAAdonates Conversation Series)



with  
**Ms. Kamla Bhasin**  
Poet, Author and Women's Rights Activist

on  
**#InternationalWomen'sDay**



## Let's Talk with Ms. Kamla Bhasin

To mark the occasion of International Women's Day, INDIAAdonates was in conversation with Ms. Kamla Bhasin- the renowned poet, author and Women's Rights Activist. The series revolved around women in leadership, the need to change our inherent patriarchal mindset and women's movement. You can watch the video [here](#)





# Collaborations and Partnerships

*We have onboarded 23 NGO partners in the last quarter*

## A Literacy Initiative Group (ALIG)



**State:** Jharkhand

**Areas of Intervention:** Livelihood, Education

**Website:** [www.aligsociety.org](http://www.aligsociety.org)

## Anjali



**State:** West Bengal

**Areas of Intervention:** Disability, Health

**Website:** [www.anjalimhro.org](http://www.anjalimhro.org)

## Bheemabhai Mahila Mandali (BMM)



**State:** Andhra Pradesh

**Areas of Intervention:** Livelihood, Health

**Website:** [www.bmmwdo.org](http://www.bmmwdo.org)

## Bhojpur Mahila Kala Kendra (BMKK)



**State:** Bihar

**Areas of Intervention:** Livelihood, Health

**Website:** [www.bhojpurmahila.org](http://www.bhojpurmahila.org)

## Centre for People's Forestry (CPF)



**State:** Telangana

**Areas of Intervention:** Environment

**Website:** [www.cpf.in](http://www.cpf.in)

## Developmental Association for Human Advancement (DEHAT)



**State:** Uttar Pradesh

**Areas of Intervention:** Livelihood, Education, Health

**Website:** [www.dehatindia.org](http://www.dehatindia.org)



## Diksha Foundation



**State:** Bihar

**Areas of Intervention:** Education

**Website:** [www.dikshafoundation.org](http://www.dikshafoundation.org)

## Dream India Network (DIN)



**State:** Karnataka

**Areas of Intervention:** Education, Elderly Care, Health

**Website:** [www.dreamindianetwork.net](http://www.dreamindianetwork.net)

## Gram Swarajya Samiti Ghoshi (GSSG)



**State:** Bihar

**Areas of Intervention:** Education, Environment, Health

**Website:** [www.gssg.org.in](http://www.gssg.org.in)

## Initiatives in Development & Education for All Foundation (IDEA)



**State:** Maharashtra

**Areas of Intervention:** Disaster & Response, Education, Income Generation

**Website:** [www.ideafoundation.org.in](http://www.ideafoundation.org.in)

## Jan Jagran Sansthan (JJS)



**State:** Bihar

**Areas of Intervention:** Disaster and Response, Education, Health, Income Generation, Water & Sanitation

**Website:** [www.jjsindia.in](http://www.jjsindia.in)

## Ladakh Ecological Development Group (LEDeG)



**State:** Jammu & Kashmir

**Areas of Intervention:** Water & Sanitation

**Website:** [www.ledeg.org](http://www.ledeg.org)



## Nav Bharat Jagriti Kendra (NBJK)

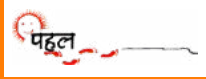


**State:** Jharkhand

**Areas of Intervention:** Water & Sanitation

**Website:** [www.nbjk.org](http://www.nbjk.org)

## Pahal Jan Sahyog Vikas Sansthan (PJSVS)



**State:** Madhya Pradesh

**Areas of Intervention:** Disability, Education, Environment, Health, Income Generation

**Website:** [www.pahalindore.org](http://www.pahalindore.org)

## Prabha Hira Pratisthan (PHP)



**State:** Maharashtra

**Areas of Intervention:** Education, Health

**Website:** [www.palawi.org](http://www.palawi.org)

## Railway Children India (RCI)



**State:** Delhi

**Areas of Intervention:** Education, Health, Income Generation

**Website:** [www.railwaychildren.org.in](http://www.railwaychildren.org.in)

## Rongmei Naga Baptist Association (RNBA)



**State:** Manipur

**Areas of Intervention:** Livelihood, Education

**Website:** [www.rnba.in](http://www.rnba.in)

## Rural Aid Service (RAS)



**State:** Manipur

**Areas of Intervention:** Environment, Income Generation, Water & Sanitation



## Society for Social Transformation & Environment Protection (sSTEP)



**State:** Assam

**Areas of Intervention:** Disaster and Response,  
Education, Income Generation

## Samadhan



**State:** Delhi

**Areas of Intervention:** Disability, Income Generation

**Website:** [www.samadhanindia.org](http://www.samadhanindia.org)

## Sukalyan Welfare Society (SWS)



**State:** West Bengal

**Areas of Intervention:** Income Generation

**Website:** [www.sukalyanindia.ngo](http://www.sukalyanindia.ngo)

## The Corbett Foundation (TCF)



**State:** Uttarakhand

**Areas of Intervention:** Environment

**Website:** [www.corbettfoundation.org](http://www.corbettfoundation.org)

## Vaani



**State:** Karnataka

**Areas of Intervention:** Disability, Education, Health

**Website:** [www.vaani.in](http://www.vaani.in)



# Ideas of Change

## Feminist Leadership: Our Future in Times of Pandemics

**Edda Kirleis**

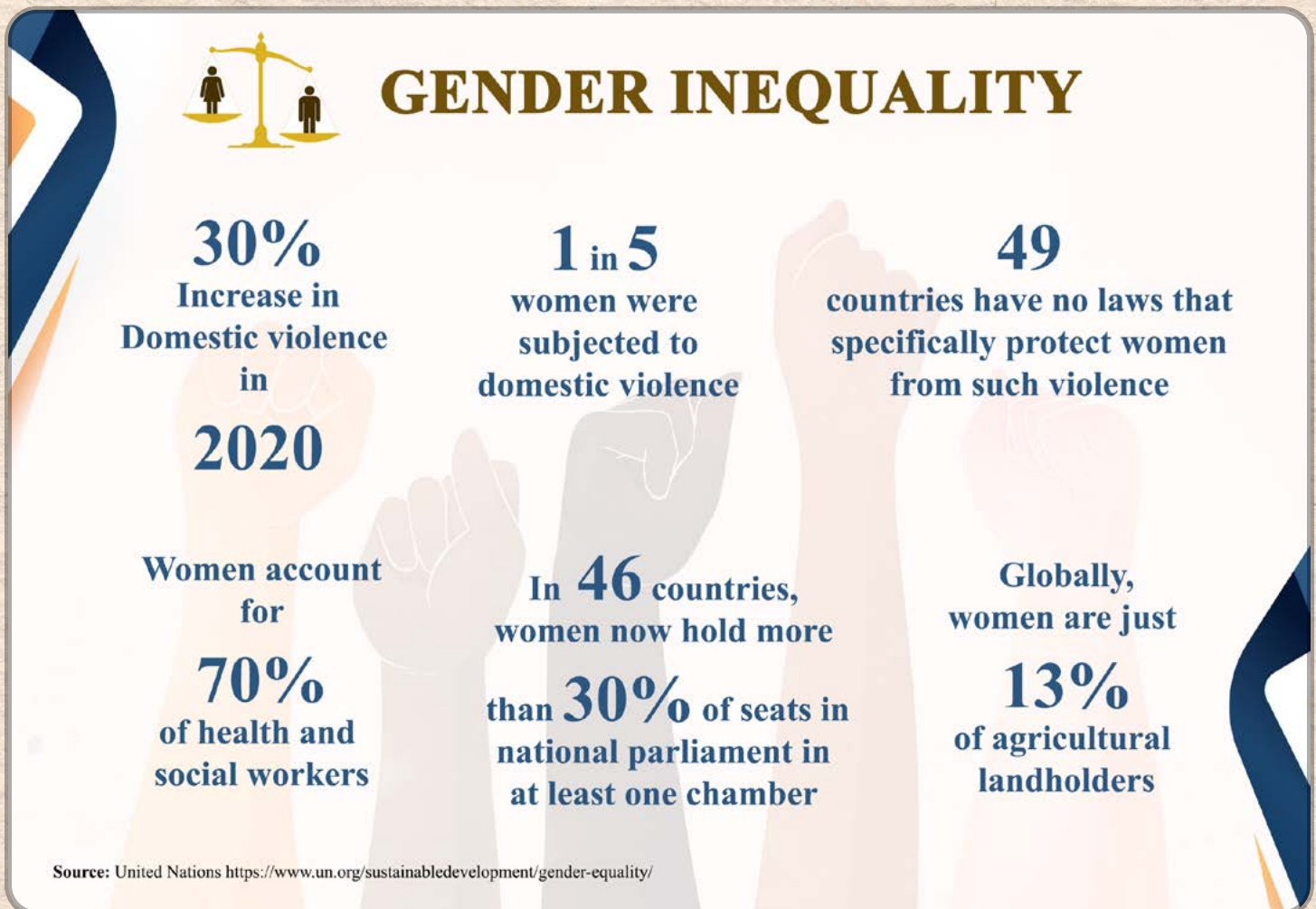
*(Edda Kirleis, is a German social scientist closely related to South Asia since 1982. She has served the voluntary development sector with different organisations, focussing on gender justice and conflict transformation.)*



COVID-19 is not only a medical disaster. In the course of it, we witnessed a steep increase of inequalities all over the globe. While the important and relevant priority of saving lives of those severely affected by COVID-19 dominate political decisions, those living in the informal sector without formal labour contracts or land ownership and without access to social security are equally threatened in their survival. Lockdowns and economic crises severely affect their livelihoods. For those among them affected by COVID-19, access to health services, a universal Human Right, is a far cry. The “COVID-19 world”, as the UN puts it, is not a new world – it just exposes the ugly face of inequality and the inability or unwillingness of our leadership to deliver equality in this world more than ever.



If we zoom into those communities affected by the multiple crises exposed in our “COVID-19 World”, we realize that they face many forms of discrimination and exclusion. We can see that increasing aggression triggered by the many frustrations coming along with pandemic politics are acted out on women all over the world. Levels of violence against women have never been increasing as much as now. This is a shadow pandemic: acc. to a recent study, UN Women observe a rise of 30% in domestic violence worldwide (on average across all countries) in 2020. In other words, 1 in 5 women became subject to domestic violence.



Not only Germany shows alarming rates. Minority communities, (religious, ethnic, Dalits, indigenous, differently abled, migrants, queer – to name a few) are often targeted as scapegoats. When those who are responsible for providing an environment, in which each human being can feel safe and enjoy rights and entitlements fail, it is easy to divert attention from their failure. Hate campaigns turn frustrated actors against the disempowered and vulnerable, who suffer twice - from the negligence of the system and the hate and violence of a politicized mob, which may even turn a neighbour into an enemy.



Many women from marginalized communities suffer from multiple forms of discrimination. How does an elderly, differently abled, women from a Dalit community cope in the COVID-19 world? Surely, her chances are different from those of the young girl in her neighbourhood who studies for her school exams? And surely different from a black American woman's opportunities who lost her job in the COVID-19 crisis? However, all of them are united in sharing experiences of disempowerment and inequality, are likely to have experienced physical and structural violence. We therefore have to understand that the process of achieving an equal future for all, as suggested by the UN, needs to take intersections of different forms of discrimination and exclusion into account. Discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation cuts through all communities, be these marginalized or not. Equality is always, but never only, about power relations between women and men.



Our current global system of neo-liberal capitalism based on unleashed finance capitalism beyond control is producing and reproducing such intersecting inequalities and forms of discrimination. As long as profit maximization in the hands of a few is the only goal in our world, exploitation of the marginalized, of women, of nature remains to be the backbone of our economic system. Most governments fail to control the international finance capital and its impact on their economies, they often even become their agents. Furthermore, in the last decade, we have witnessed, how several governments have turned authoritarian, with increased limitations on spaces for dissent, critical thinking and participation and major cuts in social spending and tax justice. These increase inequalities further, even without the pandemic. Needless to mention their deeply patriarchal violent nature.



What could “women in leadership” mean in such a setting? Certainly, it cannot stop at simply increasing the number of female persons in a system, which perpetuates inequalities. If women in leadership are meant to achieve an “equal future”, we require a major transformation of our economic system, of power structures and power relations from the local to the global level. All forms of exclusion and discrimination need to be overcome. It is not by coincidence that many initiatives for transformation are initiated by those groups who experience disempowerment the most.

It is feminist and grassroots movements all over the world who are speaking out for an economic and ecological transformation, based on values that our patriarchal and profit-oriented world neglects and denies: Care, love, empathy. These are values often associated with women and considered as weak.

These, however, are values every leadership has to include if we want to live in a world with more equality? Women in leadership can pave this way, if guided by feminist principles. Figures of women in leadership are still terribly low, and the UN needs to be appreciated for campaigning for a major increase. But just increasing the number of women will not change unjust systems. Promoting women in leadership will not work as recipe for equality unless care, love and empathy are the guiding core values for a structural and societal transformation towards an equal future. These feminist values need to be promoted by women and encompassed by all leaders. In families as much as in local communities, in politics, state institutions as much as in business. We need feminist leadership by all actors to challenge the patriarchal, exploitative and excluding logic of our economic and political systems in solidarity.

Another world is possible where no one is left behind.







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A movement to change lives  
An Initiative of DevPro

[www.indiadonates.org](http://www.indiadonates.org)



If you intend to share your Ideas of Change on The Discourse or on our Website  
do write to us directly at **[communications@indiadonates.org](mailto:communications@indiadonates.org)**

## Editorial Team

**Deepanwita De**  
Manager- Communications

**Uttama Pandit**  
Head of Operations

**Dr. Sanjay Patra**  
Founder

**Sandeep Sharma**  
Founder

## INDIAdonates

*For Communication:*

A-5, Sector 26, Noida- 201 301, India

**Tel:** +91-120-4773200

**Email:** [info@indiadonates.org](mailto:info@indiadonates.org)

**Website:** [www.indiadonates.org](http://www.indiadonates.org)

