DDUGKY’s ‘Befriending’ for extending care and support to DDUGKY students and to know their problems during covid-19 lock down period

We had already explained about the various activities being implemented as part of DDUGKY (Deen Dayal Upadhyay Grameen Kaushalya Yojana) the skill training programme being implemented through Kudumbashree during the lockdown period. Hope you would have read the ‘Making an Impact’ Article-240 in which the details about providing study materials and arranging online classes for the 7790 students who were getting trained through the 94 training agencies was explained. In the ‘Making an Impact’ Article - 241, the details about our e-learning portal was also explained. Today, we will explain about ‘Telephone Befriending’, the activity being implemented for extending unconditional emotional support to DDUGKY students by making friendly interaction with them and making opportunities for them to share about the issues they are facing in connection with covid-19. We understood that the students who started training during April 2019 and those who completed DDUGKY training during this time and those who got placements are facing many challenges during lock down. We came to know
that they are worried that whether they would be able to complete their course in time, whether they would get placements, whether they would lose their placement, whether they would have to face financial challenges etc. Also students may fear about abandonment and isolation. Telephone Befriending is the activity we have started aiming at extending mental support for them. In short, it is the activity in which officials including teachers, who know the students in person, contact them through phone, listen to their issues and extend support to them. We came to know that Rajagiri School of Social Sciences, one of our empanelled training agencies have been providing mental support through Telephone Befriending to their students whom they have been extending skill training. We understood that this method is effective and we decided to implement this activity through our other PIAs(Project Implementing Agencies) as well.

As part of this, we informed the PIAs who had been extending skill training in Kerala through DDUGKY about the same. An online meeting of these PIAs was organised on 20 May. We discussed and gave them instructions and guidelines on implementing this activity. The PIAs contacted their students through teachers, placement officers, other officials, and listened to their issues. Each PIA contacted 10 to 15 students a day, patiently listened to their worries and understood the same through Telephone Befriending. Till 26 May, we were able to contact 13,286 students through the Telephone Befriending programme and listened to their issues. Each of the agencies sent us the detailed report regarding the activities they have done till 28 May. We have decided to compile the same, prepare the final report and forward to the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD). Through Telephone Befriending, we were able to know how the covid-19 pandemic had affected the DDUGKY students in Kerala.

Until starting regular classes at the training agencies, we would be implementing such activities for extending full support in this model. We hope that through this activity we would be able to strengthen the relationship with the DDUGKY students and ensure them that they could depend on us always.