

Gujarat Journey 2020 - Gujarat Program Amid COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Sponsors and Friends,

Wow! What a difference a few weeks makes!

Gujarat, and India in general, as depicted in our last few newsletters is no more!

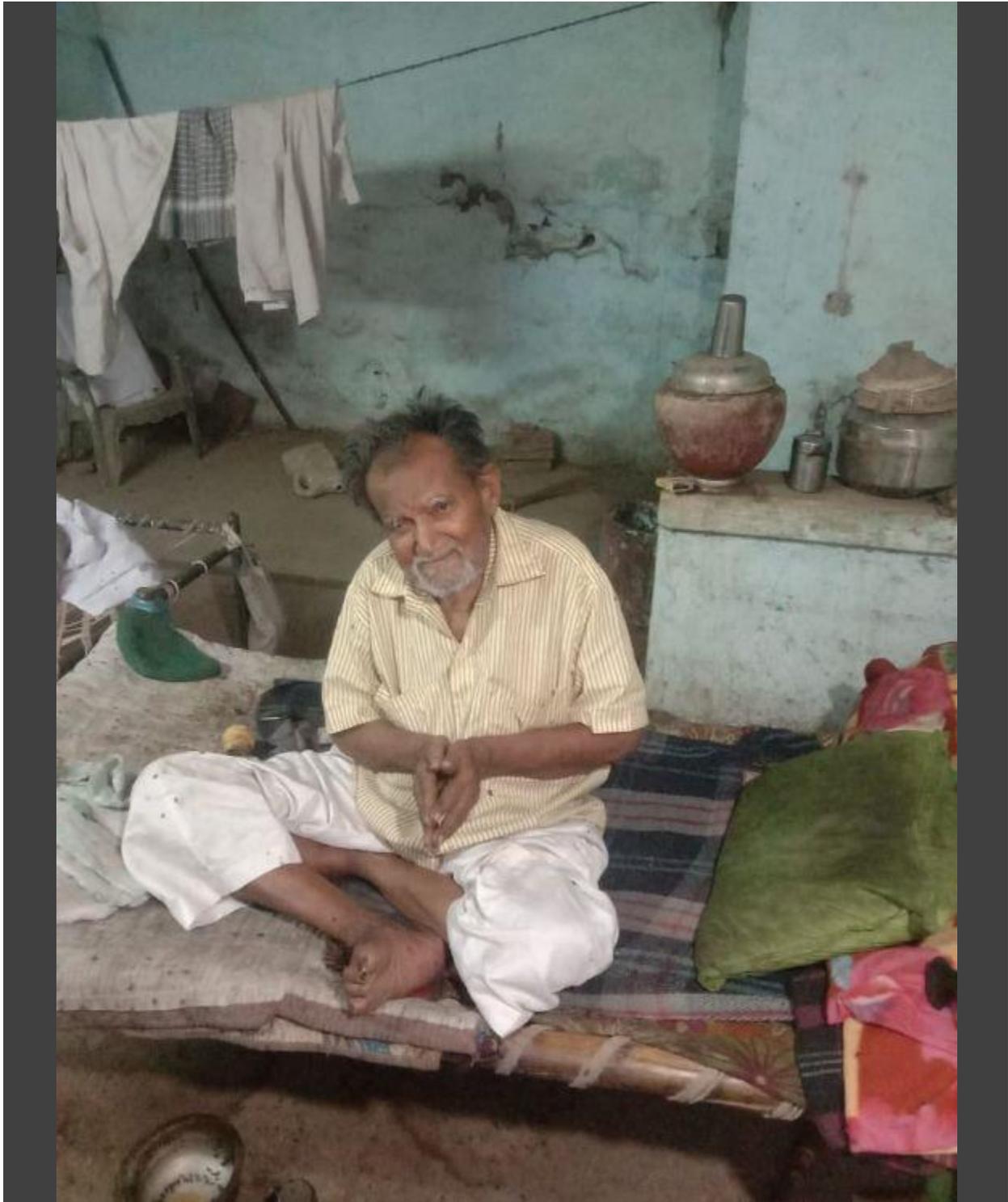
COVID-19 has wreaked havoc in the lives of our students and welfare families in India. Total shutdown by the National Government, though well-intentioned, has proven disastrous in the daily lives of its citizens. Nobody is spared, LEAST of all the poor.

Schools and hostels are closed. All but a few students and hostel staff have been sent home. Those who are still in these institutions have no home to go to. Students who have gone back home are straining meagre resources, finances and food, of the families. These and the welfare families have no or much-reduced access to government and civil society's help and resources due to the strict protocol of social distancing.

Our volunteers and heads of various institutions are doing their best to alleviate the sufferings and hardships our recipients face on a daily basis.

Though the schools are closed, the teachers and the administrative staff are still being paid. Our Malia Hatina hostel is an example of an oasis amid a desert that COVID-19 has unleashed on the land!

It was decided to create care-packages and distribute them to the poor from the surplus food supplies at the hostel. Most families would have no more than a week's supply on hand and any help would be most welcome. The staff members prepared over 300 care packages for distribution with the help of the local authorities. This proved a lifesaver for many!



People in dire need of food are being helped by our volunteers and staff members.



Ladies waiting for supplies.



Staff members with over 300 food & care packages ready for distribution!



Video showing staff members preparing over 300 care packages to help out!

Besides this endeavour, there are initiatives by generous members of our Jamat.

One such initiative is to purchase huge amounts of food and vegetables from the local farmers who are desperate to sell off these perishable items before they rot. Volunteers cook meals with these and distribute them to the poor. The outlook for the near term is dire and only the concerted efforts of many, many good-hearted people and general population's strict adherence to social distancing, a mammoth task in this overcrowded milieu, can avert an unimaginable human disaster. And, of course, prayers and positive thoughts are called for to get humanity through these very difficult times.

We, The Gujarat Team, will endeavour to do our best to find ways and means to help all those in our program and others. We appreciate your guidance, help and support at every step of the way. We will communicate with you as often as it is necessary to do so.

Together we shall make this pass too! God bless.

The Gujarat Team
