

HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT TO THE OLD AGE HOME DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

(December 2020)



Matatirtha Old Age Home

BACKGROUND

The capital city of Nepal, Kathmandu is at high risk of COVID-19. It is one of the most densely populated cities of Nepal with high migration rate. Large number of people who left the valley in the beginning of pandemic has returned after 4 months of locked down. Many Indian nationals also entered into Nepal through unguarded border points. So, the cases of COVID-19 is rapidly increasing. Around 257,700 people are tested COVID positive till 26th December 2020 all over the country and more than 50% of them are in the Kathmandu Valley. Government tests about 10000 people per day but it has decreased number of tests per day for the economic reasons which is deplorable.

Due to the rapid spread of the virus, Government of Nepal enforced 4 months long nationwide lockdown in early March and again a month long in Kathmandu in August/September. Now, the provincial and local government are authorized to take precautions and respond based on situation in their respective areas. People were dying from hunger rather than disease. But due to the limited health infrastructure, government has no option beside lockdown to control the spread of virus.

Old age homes that are solely dependent on donations are hard hit due to the lockdown and curfews in some parts of Kathmandu. These old age homes completely rely on donations by generous people who donated money and the food particularly on their birthdays, in the memory of their late parents or some other personal reasons. But due to the pandemic, donations have decreased more than 70 percent compared to pre lockdown time as reported by old age home operators. Now, many such old age homes are unable to afford the basic needs of the poor and helpless older residents and some of them are even closed down as they could not sustain. Some that are still running are compelled to ask for support at the door steps of community people. Individuals also do not donate as much because the heavy loss they are facing in their regular income. Considering the situation, Ageing Nepal with support from Ageing Nepal Switzerland provided basic food items for three months for a needy old age home of thirty older people.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

To provide food to the vulnerable older people taking shelter in community based old age homes.

SELECTION OF THE OLD AGE HOME

Following are the criteria used for selecting old age home for donation.

- a) Community old age home that does not take fee from the residents
- b) Solely dependent on donations
- c) Non-profit making and non-government
- d) Providing services free of cost for those who has nothing and no one to support
- e) Providing shelter to the street older people
- f) Compelled to cut down the amount of meals for the residents to sustain for longer period

On the basis of the above criteria, Ageing Nepal listed the following organizations.

- (a) Janak Baba Ashram
- (b) Aamakoghar (Mother's house)
- (c) Astha old age home
- (d) Matatirtha old age home

Among these Janak Baba Ashram and Astha old age home could not sustain due to the lack of basic needs and closed few months ago. It was not possible to trace where the residents had gone after the closure. Amakoghar recently got support from other sources. So, Matatirtha old age home was selected for its following merits.

- (a) It is within Kathmandu valley and yet far enough from core city area with relatively easy access from Ageing Nepal office
- (b) The home has permanent structures of its own and can accommodate a dozen or so more residents if required.
- (c) Existing scope for Ageing Nepal to collaborate in implementing some

programmes in the future, such as income generating or health service activities.

Matatirtha old age home: Matatirtha old age home was established in 1997 in order to provide shelter to destitute of over 80 ages. It is located at Chandragiri Municipality-6, Kathmandu. The home has a mission to care for needy older women without shelter, guardians and in need of care and attention. The old age home provides food, shelter, clothing, as well as health services, religious and entertainment programme free of cost.

Currently there are 30 older women residing in the home.



Building of the old age home



Typical bed room of older women



Dinning room



Yoga and meeting room

Objectives: (a) to provide basic food needs, shelter and cloths to the needy and helpless older women. (b) to work for rights of older women and (c) to protect needy and helpless older women.

Some details of the older women

Table 1: Number of older women on the basis of their health condition

Disease	Number of older women
Paralysis	1
Asthama	4
Diabetes	5
Blood pressure	5
Mental illness	1
Alzheimer's and Dementia	3
Deaf and Dumb	5
No physically problem	6

Total	30
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Table 2: Number of older women on the basis of age group

Age group	Number
60-69	14
70-79	11
80-93	5
Total	30

Table 3: Number of older women who receive old age allowance

Receive old age allowance	Number of older people
Yes	2
No	14 (Not enough papers to claim citizenship)
	14 (Qualifying age for Govt. allowance is 70)
Total	30

Citizenship certificate is mandatory to receive old age allowance in Nepal. Here, 14 older women don't have their citizenship certificates as they are unable to tell about their address and other information that is needed for citizenship certificate.

Table 4: Number of older women according to the reasons that compelled them to take shelter in the old age home

Reasons	Number
Neglected by their family members	10
Rescued from street	15
Single local older women with no relatives	5
Total	30



Roof top of the building



An Alzheimer's patient



SUPPORT EVENT

Mr. Prakash Gautam, Director of Ageing Nepal handed over food items as well as cash for vegetables and other food needs equivalent to USD 75.57 per older people to the manager of the home Mr. Ram Thapa.



Mr. Prakash Gautam, Director of Ageing Nepal handing over the food items and check to the Manager of Matatirth old age home, Mr. Ram Thapa