



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A basic health check-up for Covid-19 was conducted for police personnel by RSB volunteers, while employees from the corporate office also distributed provision kits

By Sekhar Seshan. Consulting Editor, Business India

Volunteers from RSB Transmissions supplied hygienically-packed food packets and basic provisions to some 30,000 people during the lockdown in and around the cities and towns where the group has its plants: Jamshedpur, Pune, Lucknow and Pantnagar.

Concentrating on slum and rural areas, the RSB Covid-19 Warriors went around in the morning and the evening, taking all Covid precautions like wearing masks and maintaining social distancing.

Basic health check-up for Covid-19 was conducted for police personnel of Shikrapur, near Sanaswadi in Pune, while employees from the corporate office in the city also distributed provision kits. It also provided sanitisers to 7,500 patients and health workers at rural Aurangabad through the Savitribai Phule Mahila Trust's

Hedgewar Hospital, Aurangabad.

Says group chairman R.K. Behera: “My grandfather Krishna Chandra Behera and father Bhramarbar Behera took inspiration from J.R.D. Tata and used to help the less fortunate, even though they themselves didn’t have the resources.”

In a more formalised set-up today, which his daughter-in-law Priyanka heads, the activities are mainly in three places where RSB operates: the Beheras’ native village Mania, where it has set up an English-medium school and a medical centre; Pune, where it supports a school for underprivileged children; and Chennai, helping a school for special children.

The DAV Padmabati Public School in Mania, set up in the name of the Behera brothers’ mother, was the first rural school in the area. Established in 2011, it ran on its own for five years before getting the DAV College Management Committee to take it under its wing. “We invited them, assured of help and infrastructure,” says Sripurna Sarma, who moved from Berhampur to take over as Head of School and has lived in Mania since 2006.

The RSB Health Centre in the village is an eye-opener: it is fully air-conditioned to provide comfort to those who come in from an outside temperature of as high as 46-47 degrees C in summer. Equipped with two ambulances – one of which has been converted to do duty as a school bus – the centre caters to 10 villages around it, with a population of 10,000-15,000 people who would otherwise have to travel 10km to the nearest government hospital.

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The Vidyashram School in Pune caters to underprivileged children, from the families of domestic help and masons. Of the 400-plus students – including about 150 girls – all from under-privileged families, 70 receive complete help in their fees and other expenses. The students are classified for different levels of sponsorship, while there are also regular medical check-ups and counselling about sexual abuse.

In Chennai, the Vishwas Special School run under the aegis of the Pandalai Charitable Trust, has 43 special children with a range of challenges like delayed development, gross motor skills, autism and cerebral palsy. All the students need individual attention in both academic teaching and therapy for various functions as well as for potential jobs.

The group goes far beyond the 2 per cent mandated for CSR, an RSB official points out.