

# Goa Velha residents come to the rescue of 200 starving labourers

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**Panaji:** Research scholar in economics at BITS Pilani K K Birla Goa campus, Abhishek Sinha, in early April, came face to face with economic disparity like he had never witnessed before in the state.

Sinha received a call from a former employee from Madhya Pradesh, who needed help to reach his daily wage nephew near Sinha's residence in Goa Velha. When the youth met Sinha soon after, he led the latter to a settlement where 57 labourers were living cramped inside six rooms.

"He had not eaten for two days. It is not that I have not come across poverty before. But never have I seen starvation in Goa in my decade-odd years here," said Sinha.

The researcher's call for help saw ten members of his Glenwood Gardens Flatowners Association chip in, besides his erstwhile classmates from Goa Institute of



**CRAMPED QUARTERS:** 57 of the labourers were living in six rooms in shocking conditions and some of them had not eaten for two days

Management.

Bags of rice and atta were arranged for distribution. But, soon enough, Sinha and team received call for help from another group of 70 workers in Siridao. Most of them were daily wage

labourers or made a living selling sugarcane juice, etc.

To ensure that supplies are provided in a dignified manner to the workers and without the queuing and crowding,

Sinha and his friends paid nearby store owners a lump sum and arranged for those in need to purchase directly from the shops.

"Seeing the plight of the 57 workers living cramped up and

starved in six rooms, I was moved and my friend started tagging the authorities on social media to draw their attention to these conditions. The next

morning on April 17, the police department and the North Goa collector's team came with help of some more supplies and we must thank them for their quick response," said Sinha.

He said that around ten members of the Glenwood Gardens Flatowners Association had already pledged soon after the lockdown was announced that 'no one starves under our watch'. They began by extending help to construction workers and security guards stranded due to the lockdown within their own complex.

"We tore open our own bag of rice and supplies. We are presently ensuring that supplies reach around 200 workers in Goa Velha and Siridao. Financial help is coming in from all quarters. We are hoping that others too will ensure that no one starves under their watch. One would be shocked at the conditions in which many of the stranded workers are presently living in Goa and we need to reach out," said Sinha.

**#LOCKDOWN  
HEROES**