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Our special heroes are corona warriors too



Dr. Madhumita Puri

Founder, Society for Child Development (SFCD), Kamla Nagar - New Delhi



When the COVID-19 pandemic hit us and the country went into lockdown, the first thing that happened was people quickly confined themselves to their homes. It's the most natural response as our family's safety is the most important thing for us. My family has 120 specially-abled people. And my first instinct, like everyone else, was to protect them.

I am the founder of Society for Child Development (SFCD). Our employees are specially-abled individuals, who create unique products such as organic Holi colours from temple flowers which are supplied under the brand name Avacayam. They also create beautifully designed pouches and pencil cases from leftover cloth procured from fashion houses and textile companies.



The business model is simple – what is waste for another company is a resource for us

Before I started SFCD, I was working closely with the parents of differently-abled children at the AIMS as a clinical psychologist.



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So I set up SFCD to empower them with the right skills and opportunities.

Walmart Best Price is our biggest buyer. Our longstanding association with the company has helped us grow as a business and scale up our capacity of production. And this association gave us the courage to tide over the pandemic too.



The pandemic posed unprecedented challenges for us.

When the country went into lockdown, only essential items were allowed to be sold. And the demand for our regular products fell drastically. In fact, due to the travel restrictions, our employees couldn't even come to the institute as they were dependent on public transport. But I couldn't give up on my family. I wanted them to stay engaged and keep working.

We made the best out of what we had.

I realised that we had collected surplus cloth throughout the year through donations from fashion houses. I decided we could make masks out of the cloth.

## Our members worked from their homes to make masks and we made sure that their livelihood wasn't impacted by the crisis.

We also partnered with Give India, an online donation platform, to supply essential PPE products to persons with disability. This is our small contribution during the pandemic. SFCD has also received orders for 35,000 masks from a few corporates.

We are working towards getting our digital supply chains ready. I am hopeful this will help SFCD attain new heights and open new skies for our specially-abled heroes.

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