

## Short and medium-term Civil Society Actions to deal with Covid 19

Civil Society organisations (CSOs) are frontrunners amid covid pandemic to provide immediate support to communities and migrant workers due to nationwide lockdown in 2020 followed by mass exodus from cities during the first wave. In fact, NITI Aayog has written to over 92,000 NGOs registered on Darpan portal and appealed them to assist the government in deputing volunteers and care givers to deliver services to the elderly, persons with disabilities, children, transgender persons, and other vulnerable groups; to create awareness about prevention, social distancing, isolation, and combating stigma; to provide shelter to homeless, daily wage workers, and urban poor families; set up community kitchens for migrants. NITI Aayog further requested all state governments to utilise the physical and human resources of CSOs. During the second wave also, expectations from CSOs are there as many organisations are working at the front to deal with the issue of vaccine hesitancy and dispel myths and misconceptions about covid\_vaccination. In addition, these organisations are taking up all relief measures ranging from supplying food and dry ration for the needy, distribution of masks, developing information and communication material and awareness generation, facilitating isolation facilities with local governments, health care facilities etc.

With this backdrop, following the meeting<sup>1</sup> of civil society networks, a working group<sup>2</sup> was constituted to discuss actions Civil Society is undertaking amid Covid 19 situation and an action agenda for the future. The group is recommending following strategies based on the assessment of various immediate relief measures and actions CSOs have undertaken with communities:

### Strategies to respond to short- and medium-term issues

#### A) Awareness generation

- Scientific and technology based community education and awareness to address the myths & misconceptions in the community about covid vaccination hesitancy. And training of frontline workers to deal with this hesitancy.
- Developing localised, contextual IEC material for public education and awareness drive.

#### B) Covid care support

- Mobilisation of testing kits and other medical equipments towards effective management of GP/ Cluster level Covid Care Centres and selected private hospitals
- Facilitate Bike Ambulance system in the remote and hard to reach areas and doctors on call.
- Strengthening Psycho-social support counselling service for the distressed.

---

<sup>1</sup> On 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021 meeting was organised by CYSD, PRIA, Samarthan, SSK and Unnati on urgent civil society solidarity actions in which 75 civil society representatives across the country participated

<sup>2</sup> Working group is convened by Sh Jagadananda, Mentor & Co-Founder, CYSD and members including Dr Prakash Tyagi, GRAVIS; Ms. Namita Mishra, FES; Shri Sudhir Sahni, PRADAN; Shri Joy Chakravorty, Tomorrow Foundation; Sh Prafulla Kumar Maharana, CYSD; Sh Ananta Swain, CYSD and Dr Anshuman Karol, PRIA

- Facilitate vaccination drive with Mission mode (towards saturation) – bridging the gap both from demand and supply side
- Facilitating support to the families of the deceased due to covid.

#### C) Direct support to communities

- Facilitate innovative income support activities for the distressed families including the migrant workers through alternative livelihood options
- To support migrant workers with Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Skill enhancement.
- Information and input support to small & marginal farmers
- Building resilient communities through education and scientific understanding
- Self-reliant villages and communities in terms of food security
- Facilitate entitlement monitoring and linking the eligible beneficiaries with appropriate social security schemes
- Children are the most neglected part of the community in terms of health, nutrition, sports, violence and safety. Necessary mechanisms to put in place with support of communities.
- Developing action plan for supporting informal workers and their families.

#### D) Collaboration and support

- Strengthening GO-NGO coordination for various activities on the ground. Mechanism to be built to provide timely feedback to NDMA and DDMA's on regular basis.
- Documentation and dissemination of good practices and stories of change from the ground. This also includes what is not working.
- Demonstrating various collaborative actions of the civil society.
- Strengthening engagement and capacity support to local government specially gram panchayats as they are the convergence point for all covid management and mitigation activities.
- Capacity building of the frontline workers including CRPs to deal with the crisis and deliver effectively.

In order to provide support for aforementioned issues civil society also needs to build its own capacities on community education, vaccination drive facilitation, facilitating and monitoring of social security schemes, reaching out to eligible beneficiaries and harnessing digital technology for community support.

Sh Jagadananda, Mentor & Co-Founder, CYSD, Bhubaneshwar, Odisha

Email- [jagada@cysd.org](mailto:jagada@cysd.org)

Dated 01 July 2021