



Breaking the Chain of COVID Pandemic - Secretariat of Development
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Breaking the Chain of COVID Pandemic: Jesuit Collective's Community Health Surveillance System in India

India was one of the first countries to execute a national lockdown to contain the global pandemic COVID-19. However, the lockdown failed and within a few months, it is now on the list of countries most affected by the pandemic and its second wave. The pandemic has not only brought life to a standstill threatening the lives of millions across in the country, but also overwhelmed its healthcare system. According to the latest Government reports, the fatalities due to the pandemic pushed India's death toll to 390,660 (Source: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India).



The Jesuit Collective has established a Community Health Surveillance System (CHSS) to break the chain of COVID-19 transmission, especially among migrant workers, slum dwellers and rural communities. The Collective is led by Indian Social Institute (ISI)-Delhi, Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat (SJES)/Lok Manch, Migrant Assistance and Information Network (MAIN) and the Conference Development Office-JCSA (Jesuit Conference of South Asia).

We know that no one is safe from this pandemic, until we are all safe...

Since May, the Collective has been undertaking interventions related to COVID relief and response in states such as Delhi, Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Goa, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland based on the felt-need in the communities there. It focuses on awareness building for infection prevention and on importance of vaccination, as well as providing access to critical health services. The Collective is also ensuring provision of emergency healthcare kits and food packets to poor people in the intervention locations. The important components of the intervention, considering the huge rise in COVID-19 cases, especially in the rural areas, and the immense pressure on the health system, are as follows:

- **Establish Community Health Surveillance System (CHSS):** The intervention prioritises contact tracing, containment and surveillance to arrest the spread of the COVID-19 virus in the community, especially among migrant workers, marginalised, slum dwellers and rural population through trained community health workers.
- **Awareness and information sharing:** Activities under the intervention focus on awareness building for infection prevention, COVID protocols and importance of vaccination, vaccine-related myth busting, and info on access to critical health services. Sharing local knowledge, home remedies specifically for cough, breathing trouble, fever, headache, etc., thereby reducing pressure on public healthcare services is also undertaken under the intervention.
- **Provision of healthcare kits with generic medicines, face masks, dry ration and food packets:** The intervention provides for healthcare kits with generic medicines and vitamin tablets, face masks, and dry ration and food packets to neglected/left out and vulnerable people such as migrant workers, daily wagers, rag pickers, tribals, people with disabilities, artisans, transgender, homeless, widows, children, etc.

Over the next few months, the Jesuit Collective aims to stop the spread of the pandemic and offer critical support for many vulnerable people and families in dire need across many states in India.



“The supply of dry ration kits was like a Sanjeevani for our settlement”

“At this time when most people have lost their jobs due to COVID-19, the relief material distribution by the Jesuit collective in our slum has been a great respite. We have been staring at the crisis... many families have been broken; some people have lost their dear and near ones to COVID. Some families have lost their main earning members. In such a situation, the supply of dry ration kits was like a Sanjeevani (mythological cure-all plant) for our settlement. I want this support to continue even further because our slum is located on the Aravalli in Gurgaon city. Our settlement here has been continuously demolished by the city corporation administration and we have been struggling continuously. The relief and support given by the Institute provides the courage to live further, despite our struggles. We are heartily grateful to the Indian Social Institute and team.”

Ms. Sonal Singh

