

Local Government Practices

Covid Times Update

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Compilation from States and Local Government responses on COVID-19 outbreak

In the wake of current COVID 19 outbreak that has taken over many parts of the world only in a mere span of over 3 months, the government is facing an unprecedented challenge of protecting its citizens from the virus and from the economic slowdown caused by the nationwide lockdown imposed since the March 25,2020. While in the past, the country has successfully emerged out of a crisis caused by virus outbreaks, the challenges envisaged in the present context are multi-fold and of a larger scale. Though the center has issued multiple advisories to combat the spread of the virus and mitigate the effects caused by the lockdown, especially to the vulnerable communities, the delivery mechanism of many of the interventions conducted in this context have been somewhat ambiguous. The migrant community, those dependent on daily wage labor and the informal sector economy have been the most affected at the time of this unanticipated economic crisis. The micro economic stimulus announced by the center faces challenges of effective delivery mechanism, primarily because of unavailability of data pertaining to the vulnerable communities.

To overcome such challenges, local governments in association with local organizations can be triggered to set up a mechanism to reach out to the beneficiaries and extend the much-needed socio-economic support. A localized list of those in need of support should be generated and relief activities initiated accordingly. Local institutions and stakeholders should be mobilized to set up the facilities required. These are a few suggestive measures which the governments can take, and many city/state governments have already started to take charge of the situation utilizing their capacity and understanding. They have taken some exemplary initiatives to help safeguard the lives of their citizens and here is a brief compilation of some of these:

Disclaimer: This is a compilation based on secondary data sources and does not represent primary research conducted by UMC.

Support for Urban Homeless

Kerala opens 4603 relief camps for over one lakh migrant 'guest' workers and over 35 camps for the urban homeless

The state has constructed relief camps for around 1.4 lakh migrant workers who came for work and are stuck without any income and shelter. The state has asked all local governments to intervene in the matter and set up task forces to identify these workers and get them to these camps. In addition to the migrant, more than 35 camps have been set up to house about 1545 urban homeless population. Food, masks, soaps and sanitizers have been made available in these camps. The workers are educated in their regional languages about the precautions to be taken and social distance to be maintained while at the camp. Awareness is spread through use of brochures, leaflets and short videos in regional languages.



News Source: [Livemint](#) Image source: Huffpost

Support for slum and slum like communities

Karnataka government announces initiatives for poor affected by coronavirus lockdown

The social security pension of two months would be released in advance for the poor, additional working days amount will be released in advance under MNREGA scheme and two months ration will be supplied immediately. Also, 21 lakh construction workers will be paid Rs 1,000 per person, that the government under Badavara Bandhu (interest-free loan to roadside vendors) scheme, has decided to waive Rs 13.20 crore loans.



News Source: [The New Indian Express](#) Image Source: The New Indian Express

Taking care of city staff and their sanitation workers

Free food for sanitation workers through Amma canteens in Chennai

The Greater Chennai Corporation has announced that sanitation workers will get food at Amma unavagam (canteens) for free during the lockdown period. Canteens are fully stocked for 30 days. Chennai has 407 such canteens and each canteen can cater to 2000-3000 people every day but they have been equipped to cater even more now. The most important and great thing about amma unavagams is their geographical distribution. Every ward has two canteens, which means there is an amma unavagam for every half kilometer. The canteens do not allow take-aways. Anybody can walk for half kilometer to have their meal. Amma Unavagams will be a very strong backup system and will be a saving method for people in need and the workers of our city like the sanitation workers.



News Source: [The Wire](#) Image Source: The Hindu

SHGs support to local governments and their fellow citizens

Slum-dwellers as Donors, thanks to NULM's SHGs and ALF

The COVID-19 brings out another evidence of how DAY-NULM' SHGs and ALFs can respond to a crisis. This is a story of 28 SHGs of the urban poor who live in a slum in the Bhadravati ULB of Maharashtra. Most of them are daily wagers and domestic workers. As a part of preparedness, these SHGs, under the leadership of their ALF (Unnati), have collected Rs.5000 from their corpus and bought the food grains. The food grains have been packaged and distributed in the informal settlement, with each household getting 2 kg of wheat and 2 kg of rice. The SHGs have shown their organizational strength, the ALF it's convening skill. A hallmark is that those families, not covered under the SHGs, have also been the beneficiaries as they too were given the food packets.

Use of technology in managing the covid outbreak

45 smart city command and control centres turn into Covid-19 war rooms



News Source: [Economic Times](#) Image Source: MIT Technology Review, getty images

The hi-tech command and control centres across 45 smart cities have transformed overnight into the nerve centre for operations to contain the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. The command and control centres constructed under Smart City Mission have so far been used for various municipal functions, including 24-hour water supply projects, property tax collection, traffic management, street lighting,

monitoring bus movement and CCTV for security. Within a few days cities switched the functions to monitor quarantine facilities, provide free WiFi facilities to quarantined people and give them support, track health of suspected patients and their contacts under home quarantine, monitoring the roads and traffic through drones and pushing awareness messages through the helplines. Bengaluru, for instance, converted its command and control center within 24 hours into Corona virus War Room. This 24x7 center has mapped each Covid-19 positive case using GIS, tracking health care workers using GPS and drawing up containment plan using heat mapping technologies

Learnings from international responses to COVID

How smart technologies help China combat COVID-19 and improve city resilience

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in China in December,2019, the Chinese government has taken measures such as cities lockdown, home quarantine, work resumption delay,and so on. It has also been noted that smart technologies have played a more positive and powerful role in facing this public health challenge and controlling the epidemic situation in the country. They have used smart technologies to convert the big data (of the latest epidemic situation) into a real-time information distribution system. Heat maps and forecast reports have been used to make people aware about situation in their region. Artificial intelligence has been used to improve the quality of analysis, identify signs and symptoms without touch and introduce self-help consulting. This has helped reduce human interaction and break the chain. The country has set up contact less delivery system wherein the delivery person places the parcel in designated places and does not get in touch with anyone. In addition to these, a range of other smart technologies have been used to mitigate the spread of the virus and ensure safety of citizens. Countries around the world can learn from China's response to the outbreak.



Image Source: Financial Times



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