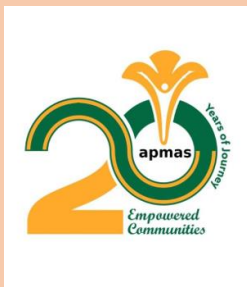


## **Voluntary Organisations Providing COVID-19 Relief in South India**

The Covid-19 pandemic brought with it not just a health catastrophe but a socio-economic crisis as well. It has aggravated the disparities that already existed in Indian society and has disproportionately affected the marginalised communities in their access to food, shelter, healthcare, livelihood, among others. The scale and diversity of its impact are unprecedented in the chapters of independent India. The central and various state governments have mobilised their resources and energy to tackle the challenges that the pandemic has brought forth. However, it is now apparent that the impact of these measures has faced limitations in providing relief to the intended beneficiaries. It is here that civil society and voluntary organisations have stepped up their engagement in taking on the challenge of the pandemic. They have been working selflessly and tirelessly throughout the pandemic to provide relief to all those who need it and those who have been left out from the government's welfare measures. Here at Voluntary Action Network of India (VANI), we are committed to recognising and documenting the work of such unsung heroes and providing a platform to support their work further. Following are some of the countless endeavours that active citizens have undertaken in the state of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Karnataka to mitigate the challenges of the pandemic and help those who need it the most.

### **Andhra Pradesh**



### **APMAS (state level focal agency for GO-NGO collaboration in Andhra Pradesh)**

The executive director of Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority, Additional Director, Health, Joint Collectors and 26 lead NGOs from 13 districts of Andhra Pradesh with APMAS as focal state level agency held various meetings under the leadership of Dr Jawahar Reddy, IAS, Special Chief Secretary and Chairperson of COVID Command and Control Centre to discuss and facilitate the collaboration between the Government and 970 NGOs/CSOs in the state to effectively combat the pandemic and its adverse impact on the lives and livelihood of the communities. A committee of government organised-NGOs (GO-NGO) was formed to facilitate better and seamless coordination among them in a systemic manner. State level and district level GO-NGO coordination centres were set up for efficient and effective communication where the NGOs could take up the ground level issues with the government for smooth resolution. The NGOs were expected to support the government's efforts in the containment of the virus and in the welfare measures by engaging in activities such as Identifying and encouraging people with COVID symptoms to quarantine in village isolation centres, ensuring nutritious food and adequate protective kits for people staying as well as

working in the isolation centres, creating awareness about COVID appropriate behaviour and importance of vaccination, reaching out to poor and vulnerable people in remote and tribal areas to understand their needs and deliver required services, post covid management and psychological counselling to Covid infected people and their families, ensuring full availability of proper equipment in PHCs and COVID-dedicated hospitals among others. NGOs gathered and shared information about the current status of ongoing activities collected from ground-level engagements with the officials. NGOs were also actively engaged in food distribution to the poor and migrant households. SHGs women were involved in the preparation of the food. The NGOs supported local hospitals by providing N95 masks, surgical gloves, and other protective apparels. The Indian red cross joined their effort by supplying PPE kits and oximeters. They gave special attention to remote and tribal areas to cater to their needs, such as distributing dry ration kits. Few of the NGOs also provided support for the proper and dignified cremation of the deceased. Children orphaned because of COVID were given financial support of Rs. 10 lakhs by the district administration. UNICEF and APMAS coordinated in capacity building activities such as Social Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) materials to create awareness on covid appropriate behaviours. Tele-counselling was provided to the widows who were clinically depressed and developed suicidal tendencies. The NGOs mapped the prevalence of vaccine hesitancy and carried out extensive awareness campaigns to address the issue. In Vishakhapatnam, volunteers of the NGOs successfully implemented the “No mask - No entry” campaign, especially in the fish markets and beach places.

### Hyderabad



Based in Hyderabad, Confederation of Voluntary Associations (COVA) is a network of over 700 grass-root voluntary organisations which aims to advance communal harmony, peace, and justice in Indian society. The association actively engages women, youth, and professionals from all walks of life for the empowerment of women, children’s rights, raising issues concerning the youth, education, public health, financial inclusion of the marginalized, environmental advocacy and natural and man-made calamities.

After the lockdown was announced, COVA provided relief, livelihood restoration, support for repairs of damaged hutments, reconstruction of hutments and replacement of household utensils and clothes to families apart from providing cooked meals to 77,000 migrants and refugees during COVID-19 pandemic and the floods. COVA successfully advocated for the supply of free rations under the PDS to the migrant workers, providing relief to over 350,000 migrant workers stuck in the state of Telangana. COVA started a Community Kitchen in collaboration with Surge Impact Foundation to provide cooked food twice a day to 500 migrant workers and their families to help them to fast with ease during the month of Ramazan at Kishanbagh, Hyderabad. The organization also provided 3036 kits for a month’s ration to migrant workers, private schools teachers, poor families and refugees from Myanmar, Sudan, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Syria, Palestine, Kenya, and Somalia.

COVA provided working capital to help restore small businesses. Grants of Rs. 2000 to 10000 were provided to 264 persons and rickshaws of 60 scrap collectors were repaired. 112 of these

beneficiaries were provided loans by SAFA as part of their Build Back Program. During Bakrid, COVA urged the public to donate two-third share of their festival budget towards providing relief to private school teachers who had not received their salaries for months. The request received overwhelming support from clerics and faith leaders and through this initiative, COVA provided ration kits to 230 teachers. COVA proposed that it will pay for the salary of teachers, who were not being paid salaries dur to the lockdown and closure of schools, and the management should permit two students to study free for every teacher supported. Managements agreed and 168 students were able to continue their studies free when schools reopened for 2021-21. (Source: Annual Report of COVA Peace Network, 2020-2021)

**Reach at-** 18-13-8/A/508/B, Bandlaguda, Chandrayangutta, Hyderabad, Telangana 500005- India. Contact- +91 40 24442984, Mail at- [info@covanetwork.org](mailto:info@covanetwork.org)



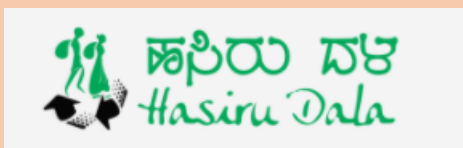
Sakina Foundation works for universal brotherhood, regional equality, equal opportunity for every section of society, care for the poor and underprivileged and unfettered exchange of best ideas and practices among similar organizations. Their major areas of concern have been identified keeping in view their immediate need, intensity, reach, and constructive outcome. To mitigate the threat of hunger among the most vulnerable, the foundation distributed close to 6000 packets of cooked meals all throughout the lockdown in remote areas. Over nine lakh ration kits were distributed which supported around 17,000 families. To help the elderly, homeless, specially abled and other vulnerable groups of people access COVID vaccines, transportation drives were initiated to the vaccine centres. Door-to-door awareness campaigns were carried out to remove vaccine hesitancy. As part of the ‘vaccine on wheels’ campaign, over 10,000 beneficiaries were inoculated, and more than fifty vaccination vans were mobilised at the four zones of Hyderabad city to inoculate the people who were unable to access the vaccines free of any expenses. The foundation also started the critical life-saving ‘Oxygen on wheels’ campaign to supply emergency oxygen cylinders as far away as 200 km. Under the campaign, they provided over 5000 free oxygen cylinders which benefitted around 5000 patients. In addition, more than 40 free multi-speciality medical camps were organised

and free medicines worth Rs. 1 lakh were distributed. More than 700 people were screened at each camp, serving more than 40, 000 people.

**Reach at-** 46, Surya Nagar, Toli Chowki, Shaikhpet, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad | Contact at- +91 800 800 8012 | Mail- [info@sakinafoundation.org](mailto:info@sakinafoundation.org)



## **Bangalore**



Hasiru Dala, which means Green Force in Kannada, is a social impact organisation that works with waste pickers and other waste workers in the informal economy of waste. The organisation's purpose is to ensure livelihood and dignified life for the community by guaranteeing access to the waste generated by the city. The goal is to realise the objective of incorporating the waste-pickers and informal workers into the formal waste management system of the city. Due to their strong engagement with the community, they were able to infer the needs of the most vulnerable groups among them - those who could not access food grains under the PDS, single parents, orphaned children, old age pensioners, and quickly started the ration distribution programme across several cities in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu. The organisation undertook the distribution of hygiene kits, protein kits and other essential kits for young children, lactating mothers, and pregnant women. In Bengaluru, they distributed grocery kits to migrant workers and slum dwellers, collaborating with citizen group

With Bengaluru. In Nayandanahalli, a recycling hub where thousands of workers are engaged in sorting work, they distributed hygiene kits and informational posters. They also came out with a book in Kannada for the children of the waste pickers. Waste workers, classified as essential workers during the lockdowns, were provided with mid-day meals, transport facilitation and livelihood support, as well as PPE kits during both years. In 2021 the organisation also organised vaccinations for the eligible members of the community as well as organising healthcare when community members were ill or affected by COVID-19. In Bengaluru, Hasiru Dala worked to ensure medical care was available for those who needed it, and in collaboration with HBS Hospitals, Karnataka Covid: Jeevan Anmol, Mercy Mission, St. Joseph's College and Titan Company and XLRI Alumni Association organised a Covid Care Centre at St. Joseph's College where underprivileged people could have a place to isolate themselves with their families and receive necessary medical care. We provided beds to 66 people who needed care over the course of 3 weeks in May and June 2021. The centre is completely equipped and can be reopened if there is a need. In addition, support was given to waste pickers family members who were in isolation at home.

**Reach at-** Hasiru Dala Room No. 12, 2nd Floor, Lakshmi Building Old No.11/6, New No. 14, J C Road, Bangalore-560002 | Contact at- +91 99868 08866 | Mail at- [info@hasirudala.in](mailto:info@hasirudala.in)



A secular not-for-profit, people-centric development agency based in Bengaluru, The Concerned for Working Children (CWC) was one of the first organisations to focus on working children's plight and needs. They collaborate with children's groups, local government, national and international agencies to implement comprehensive, pragmatic, and viable solutions to various problems of children and means to empower them. They have been thrice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

During the pandemic, working directly with rural and urban poor communities, migrant workers, children, elderly, and other vulnerable communities to provide them with entitlements such as food, subsidised grocery, and health care. It also worked towards generating awareness on issues related to COVID-19 and regarding the provisions that are committed to citizens by the National and State governments.

CWC provided residential care, required medical protection in relation to COVID-19, nutritional care, emotional support, opportunities for creative outputs and educative engagements for 100 children from most vulnerable communities. The organisation shared its 24X7 help line to provide rapid responses to requirements of communities and individuals in need. CWC has been in touch with representatives of a total of 2057 families living in 24 rural and urban areas in Udupi district.

CWC supported and assisted 335 migrant workers. They facilitated children to conduct their own mapping exercises to identify vulnerable areas. CWC coordinated with over 2300 elected local government representatives (Grama Panchayat members) of 1047 Panchayats belonging to 23 Districts and 105 Taluks of Karnataka, providing them with inputs about the colossal responsibility of the local governments in relation to disaster management. CWC also assisted them to engage with government officials in the Task Forces established by the Panchayats to address COVID-19.

At the State level, to bring about policy related changes, CWC is in constant touch with senior officials to direct their attention to pressing matters faced by the communities and alerting them to pre-empt concerns. Hence CWC collaborated with senior officials to ensure responsive state level directions and Governmental Orders regarding several matters that had state-wide implications. Specific mention is to be made of this leading to Government Orders related to distribution of rations for children attending anganwadi, supply of mid-day meal groceries for school children and the distribution of free rations to be de-linked from use of OTP, provision of Care packages from children who were sent back home from childcare institutions, highly delayed salaries of Asha Workers and Anganwadi workers released within days of CWC's intervention etc.

CWC has contributed to Rural Development and Panchayat Raj's (RDPR) information management system to systematise a database of children and community members affected by COVID, their status and updates about the services due to them as entitlements. Key departments collaborated with are the Department of Rural Development, MGNREGA, Department of Women and Child Welfare, Department of Education, Department of Tribal Welfare, Revenue Department and Department of Health. CWC is a part of the NGOs for COVID team led by the Principal Secretary, RDPR.

**Reach at-** 303/2, L B Shastri Nagar Vimanapura Post, Bangalore 560 017 | Contact at- +91 91-80-25234611 | Mail- cwc@pobox.com

## Let's Document

Currently in India, many NGOs are involved in combating the COVID-19 crisis. A lot of on-ground activities are being done by organizations in every part of this country. VANI has taken an initiative to document these interventions so that the sector's work gets more visibility, engagement, and outreach. Kindly reach out to us at [info@vaniindia.org](mailto:info@vaniindia.org). We appreciate your time and effort.

### **About Voluntary Action Network India (VANI)**

VANI is a national network of Indian Voluntary Development Organisations (VDOs). Currently VANI has 624 members with an outreach to around 10,000 VDOs across India. The membership of VANI ranges from grass roots to the national organizations. The members work on a range of priority development issues of the government including education, health, nutrition, integrated child development, livelihood, skill development, environment, natural resource management, climate change, water and sanitation, emergency response and preparedness, agriculture, poverty and so on, in some of the most remote areas of the country. In the year 2017-18 our network collectively reached out to over 32 million people belonging to vulnerable and marginalized groups including children, disabled people, women, elderly, farmers, Dalit, tribals, disaster survivors, unemployed, youth, LGBT, sex workers etc. VANI through its efforts and strategies aims to build a strong civil society sector not only at national but regional and local level as well.

VANI was set up with the mission to promote voluntarism, create space for the sector by fostering value based voluntary action. VANI's interventions are focused to strengthen the external and internal enabling environment. To ensure the external enabling environment, VANI conducts evidence-based advocacy which includes regulatory frameworks and resource generation. In order to achieve this VANI works with the government, private sector, bilateral, multilaterals and other stakeholders. For strengthening the internal enabling environment, VANI works towards building resilience and promoting accountability, transparency, and compliance through the interactive educational events and information dissemination. VANI strives to become a resource centre by conducting evidence-based research; publishing studies, articles and reports not only at state level but national and global level as well.



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