

The Tremendous Role of Non-Government Organizations in Lockdown Situation of India

ShamsherRahaman

Assistant Professor, Department of History, VidyasagarMahavidyalaya, University of Calcutta

ABSTRACT: *Non-Governmental Organizations are still playing a very important role to keep the society safe, generating awareness and development throughout lockdown India. In the eye of the rising COVID-19 storm, non-government organizations, big and small, are performing a massive task. The novel coronavirus lockdown has comfortably cooped most of us at home but marginalized communities in the unorganized sector, such as daily laborers, construction workers, street vendors and people involved in the cottage industry are terribly affected by the economic and social reflection of lockdown. NGOs coming forward to support the migrant workers and to fight the pandemic and provided food, water and transportation at their cost. In this paper I briefly analyze the role and contribution of NGOs (first half of 2020) in the lockdown situation of India. In this situation NGOs become unassuming heroes because they help fill in the gaps that governments often neglect and sprung into action to fill in gaps of communication and delivery of essential items to poor underserved communities.*

KEYWORDS: *Pandemic, NGOs, combat against COVID-19, unassuming heroes, marginalized communities*

Date of Submission: 28-07-2020

Date of Acceptance: 11-08-2020

I. INTRODUCTION

The novel coronavirus (Covid-19) has now spread to almost all countries of the world as an epidemic. The first COVID-19 incident in the Indian state Kerala was reported on January 30, 2020 when a university student travelled back to Kerala from Wuhan city of central China. In bid to combat the spread of Novel Coronavirus, governments across the world have been scrambling to engage in mass testing, quarantine, eventual lockdown and contact tracking. As of July 12, 2020, the number of infected people in India are 849553 and a total of 22674 people have died. After a 14-hour voluntary public curfew with just a few hours advance notice on 22 March, the Government of India under prime minister ordered a nationwide lockdown for 21 days on 24 March 2020 and lockdown is still going on July. From March 24, 2020 to May 31, 2020, the lockdown period started to increase in several episodes, but from July 1, Unlock-2 episode is running with more ease in restriction which will continue till July 31. According to strictness of government lockdown we can categories it into two parts- first is Hard Lockdown (from 25 March to 4 May) and another is Moderate Lockdown (from 5 May to 30 June). Strict lockdown has affected the life of people specially Marginal Community like migrant labor and homeless people. But in the situation of moderate lockdown affecting people is not more painful than strict lockdown. But the impact of overall lockdown is seen everywhere in our society. “80% of the small and marginal farmers said that their income is reduced after COVID-19 outbreak” according to rapid research conducted by Caritas India in 18 different states of India published on 6 June 2020.

In this paper I briefly analyze the role and contribution of NGOs for marginal communities in lockdown India. NGOs playing tremendous roles where not limited to service delivery, welfare works for community development, human rights, equitable governance and citizens’ participation etc. There are other importance where NGOs can play a character to increase the efficacy of the government’s response. India’s Prime Minister NorendraModi also thanked NGOs and said that in these emergency situations NGOs are the most important friend of the country. In civil society, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) coming forward to play a significant role in generating awareness about COVID-19 and undertaking development activities for the improvement of disadvantaged sections of our society.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER

The present study aims to measure the role of NGOs in lockdown Indian society. Specifically, the objectives are as follows:

- A. To analyze the impact of lockdown on different sections of Indian society.
- B. To describe and assess the role and performance of non-governmental organizations to recover marginal communities during Pandemic India.
- C. To identify the factors of NGOs and their activities in various states.

III. METHODOLOGY

In this present study descriptive and analytical methods have been used. Data is collected from secondary sources. Secondary data is obtained from various published records, newspapers, books, magazines and journals and websites.

IV. HISTORY OF NGOs IN INDIA

The term NGOs is of comparatively recent origin but voluntary organizations working inside or outside National boundaries have had an overlong history. NGOs or voluntary organizations are not a new phenomenon and the concept of voluntary action is very ancient. Its root lay deep in Indian soil. During ancient and medieval age of India voluntarism operated freely and exclusively in the field of education, medicine and cultural promotion and even active as secure in crisis like drought, epidemics, floods and foreign invention (Inamdar, 1987)

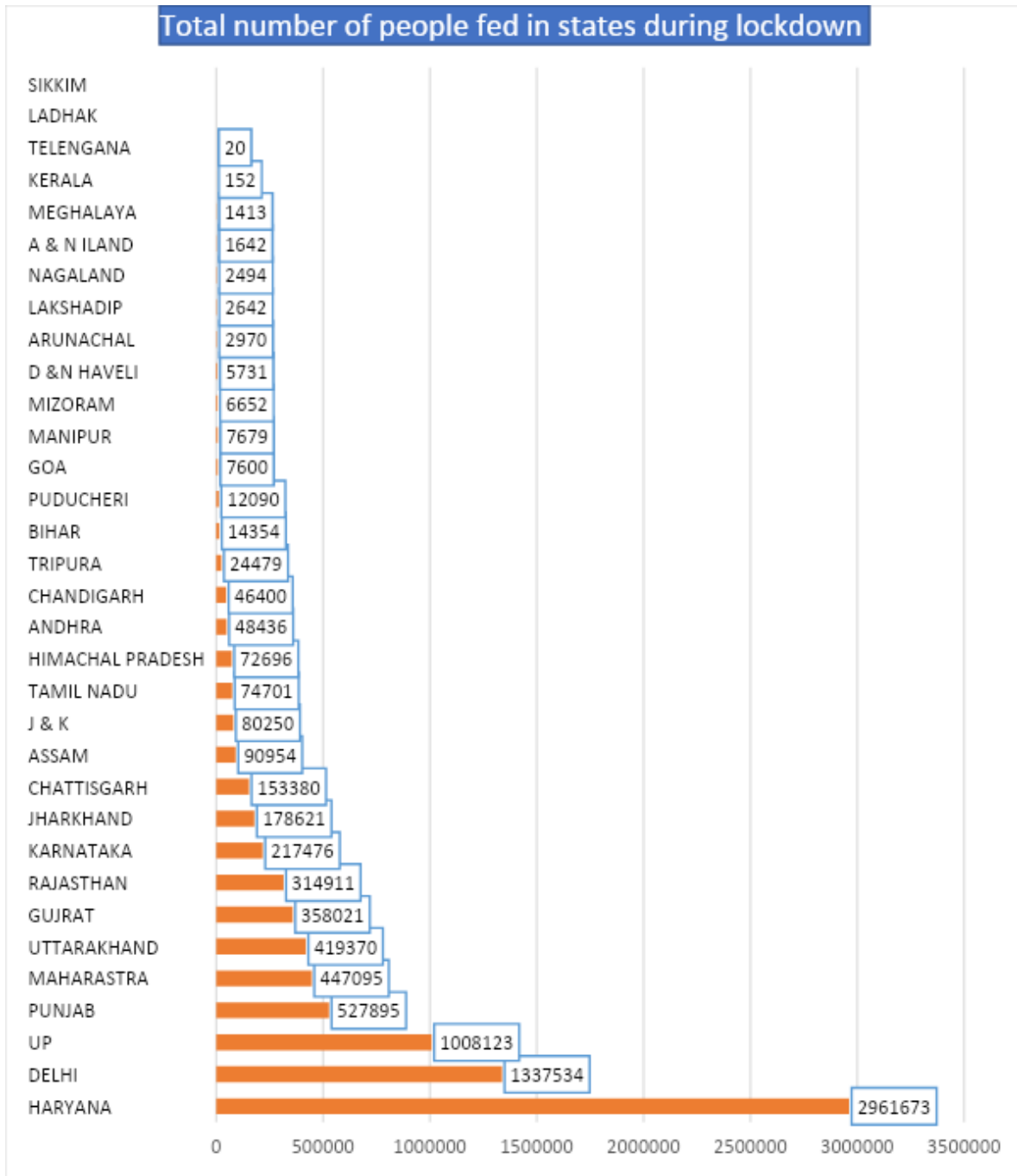
In the nineteenth century voluntary agencies provided services to the underprivileged and weaker sections of the society in the field of social and religion reforms. Raja Rammohan Roy, Devendranath Tagore, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, JyotibaPhule, Keshab Chandra Sen, DayanandSaraswati, Syed Ahmed Khan, Swami Vivekananda, kandukuriVeerasingampantulu were the people who worked with great dedication towards removal of caste restriction, improvement condition of widows, women education , destitute women etc. During the second half of the nineteenth century numerous organisations were established including the Friends-in-Need society (1858), Prarthanasamaj (1864), the National Council for Women in India (1875). During this period they also took interest in spreading education among women, tribal and others, and providing their health and living conditions. Mahatma Gandhi's return to India in 1916 and sifted the focus of development activities to economic self-sufficiency. Mahatma Gandhi started his own programme of removal untouchability, temperance and some constructive programmes. He set up appropriate National Organisations with dedicated workers, for example HarijanSevakSangh, All Village Industries Association etc.

Now in India have been operating nearly 34 lakh non-government organizations all over the country in a variety of fields ranging from disaster relief to assistance for marginalized and disadvantaged communities (Quartz news). According to NGO Darpan site of Government of India total number signed up NGOs are 94819. But everywhere in our country many non-registered NGOs are working for poor people till now. They are a major part of a civil society which bring rapid change and social transformation. NGOs are an important sector in our society that can make a path between knowledge and practice. In the painful situation in our country NGOs, given their deep Connect with social issues. There is nobody placed than the NGOs to understand the pulse at grassroots and engage closely with marginal communities.

V. NGOs FOR MARGINAL COMMUNITY

A recurring theme in modern development discourse is the role of NGOs providing appropriate needs for poor and marginalized communities. Pandemic has created a painful situation which has impacted every section of Indian society, but the migrant laborers and farmer communities had to pay a lot in this painful situation. Unemployment was not only seen in the urban regions, but the rural regions also suffered its impact during strict lockdown until last of May. In India, from starting of lockdown bitterly hurt marginalized communities due to loss of livelihood and lack of food, shelter, health and basic needs. The government does have a responsibility to protect the health and well-being of population, but some of these steps have left. Thousands of migrant workers across the country are marooned with rail and bus services shut down or have set out walking on foot to reach home in states like Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Gujarat, Rajasthan etc. In these situations NGOs have become only a hope for poor people.

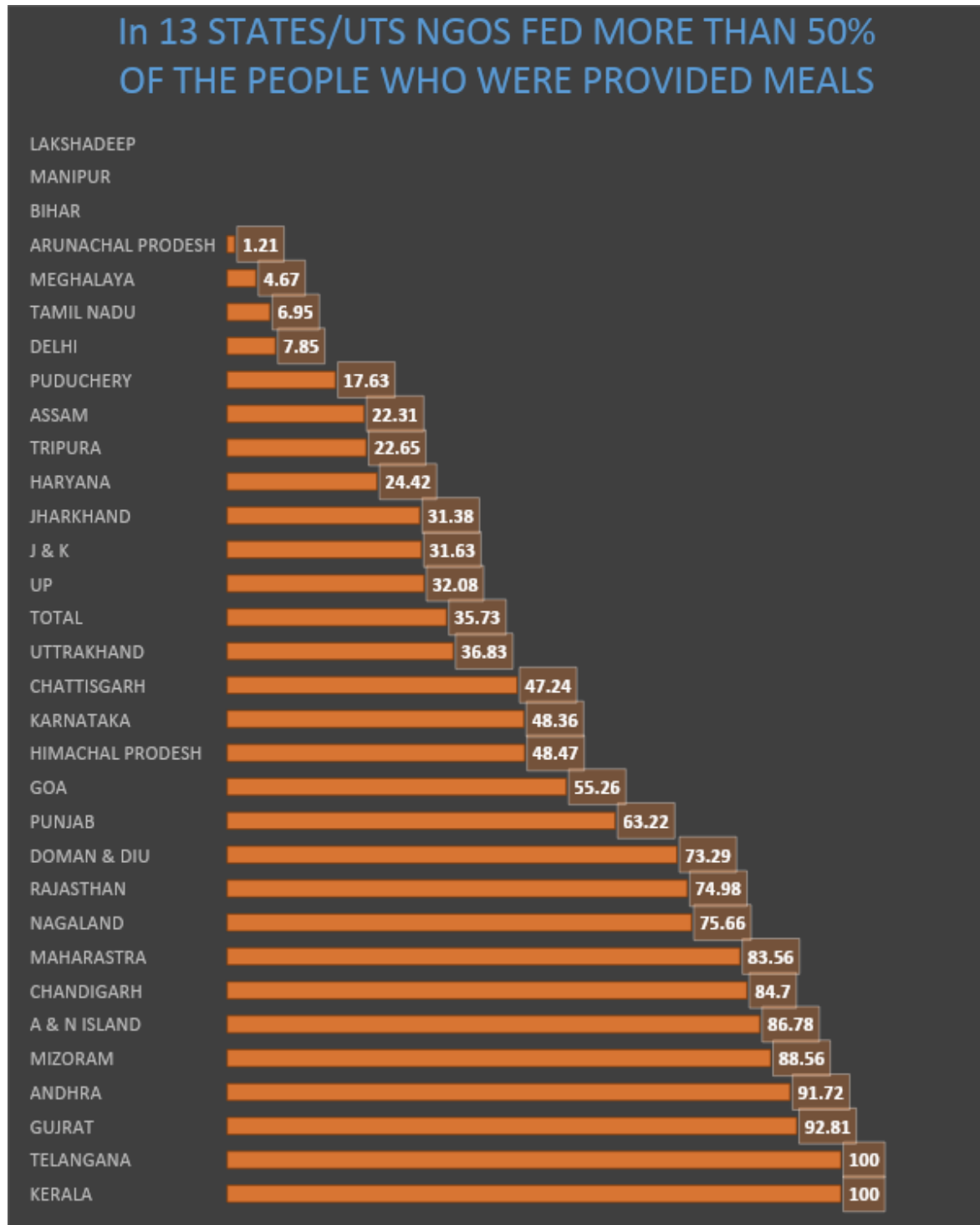
We can clearly say that the third pillar of strength in fight against Novel Coronavirus are NGOs and Civil Society organizations. Most non-governmental organizations have the presence, skill and experience to contribute substantially to national pandemic planning and response. India witnessed large scale efforts of multiple NGOs across the country, which sprang in action with the help of volunteers. In our country volunteers reached out to people affected by the lockdown, especially daily wagers, homeless and other people. According to India Today news non-governmental organization in 13 states UTs supplied meals to more people than their respective state government did during the nationwide lockdown that started on March 25. According to a reply submitted by the Government of India in Supreme Court on 7 April, a total of 8426509 people were distributed meals across the country during the first phase of lockdown. Of this, 54.15 lakh people were fed by state government while the remaining 30.11 lakh were fed by NGOs.



Source: Government of India replay in Supreme Court on 7 April 2020.

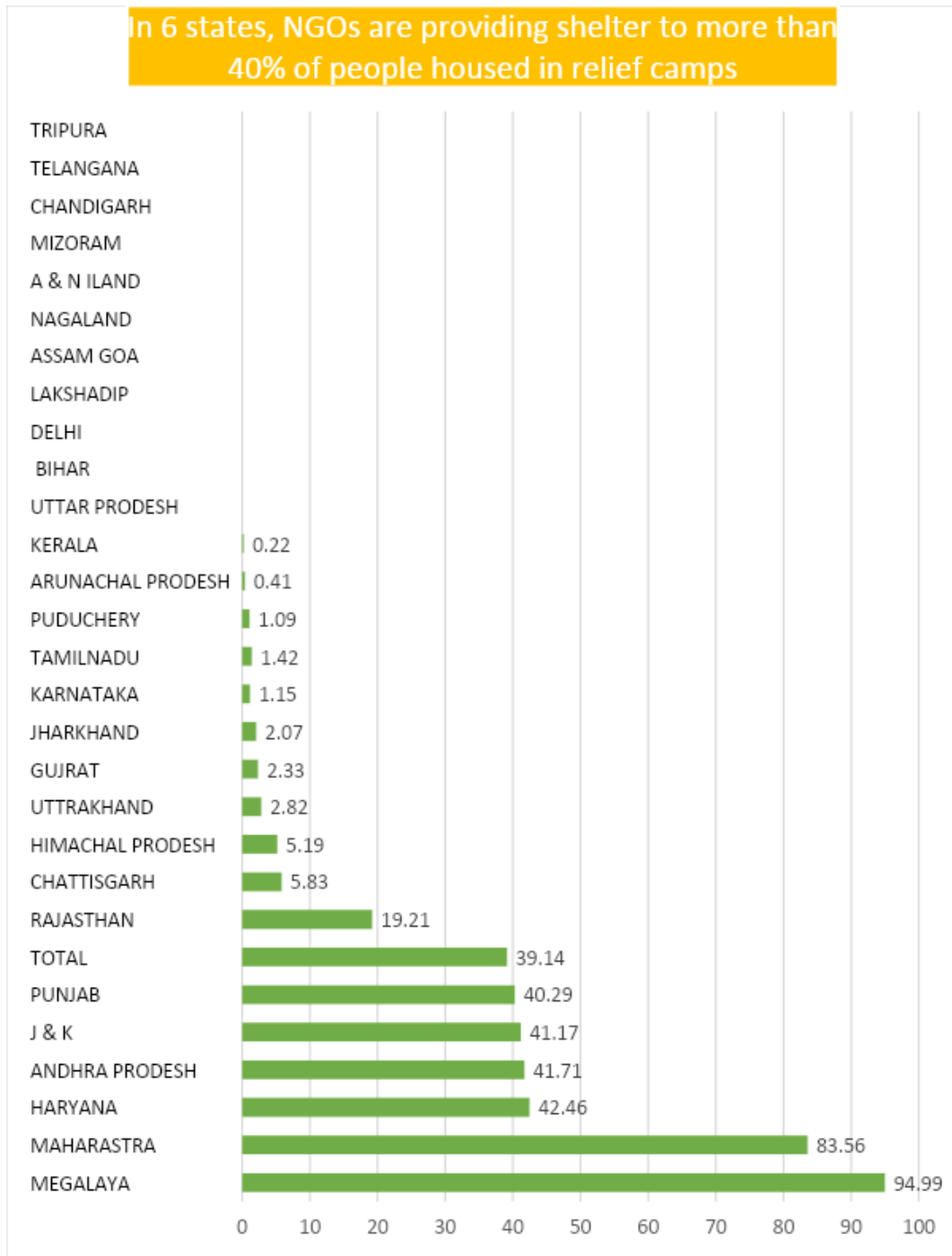
In Kerala state and Telangana state, all meals were fully supplied by NGOs during the pandemic lockdown, central government data show, while in states such as Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Mizoram, NGOs supplied 92.8 percent, 91.7 percent and 88.5 percent of all the meals, respectively.

Share of NGOs in total no. of people fed during lockdown situation (in %)



Source: Government of India replay in Supreme Court on 7 April 2020.

Apart from providing meals to the needy people, NGOs also opened shelter homes across the country for people to take refuge. According to Government of India’s reply 10.37 lakh people in India took refuge in shelter homes provided by state government and NGOs. Of these 10.37 lakh or 39.14 percent, stayed in camps set up by NGOs so it proves the best performance NGOs. Maharashtra is one of the prime example of how NGOs are contributing in sheltering people hit by the lockdown. Of the 4 lakh 47 thousand people who are in shelter homes and relief camps in the state Maharashtra and 83.56 percent are in camps set up by NGOs. If we see the scenario in Meghalaya, percentage of people who are in relief camps is 95 percent more than Maharashtra. Overall, there are six states where NGOs provided shelter to more than 40 percent of the people in shelter or relief camps.



Source: Government of India replay in Supreme Court on 7 April 2020.

The government of India and state governments are operating community kitchens and giving free ration to poor and homeless people till now but it's not reaching everyone. To complement the state and central governments' efforts countless NGOs along with volunteer groups are working tirelessly to provide food and other essentials to marginal communities. Here are a few non-profits organization who are at the foremost position of the ongoing relief effort:

NGOs FOR HEALTH

The combat against COVID-19 needed as many hands as were available. The work was too big for the government to handle alone. Here is impotence of NGOs. An outstanding contribution of NGOs supporting government efforts in setting up health camps and subordinate volunteers to deliver services to the children,

elder, PWD and others. They have tried to develop communicating strategies in different parts of our country taking awareness measures to the community level.

The outbreak of Novel Coronavirus cases have not only affected on people physical health, but also their mental health. Children, working women, old person and people with underlying health conditions are feeling fear and worry. Many doctors and even Indian Psychiatry Society (IPS) have reported increase of mental stress of people during present lockdown situations. In this condition to provide support to people, several NGOs have stepped up their efforts. The Mind Foundation, Diya Foundation, Neptune Foundation, The Banyan and more NGOs are working for people deal with mental health issues in lockdown India.

NGOs FOR FARMERS

While the government announced several measures including exemption of agriculture and fisheries from lockdown restrictions in end of March, but there were gaps in implementation in ground level. Several NGOs with field presence have been engaged providing needed support that is possible under the circumstances. A rapid research, Caritus India has presented the impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on smallholder farming sector. Research focused on the impact of pandemic on agricultural production, availability of food and nutrition, distribution, generation of income and expenses. Caritus India states shocking report that 80.4% farmers have reduced income. In this situations NGOS working continuously to help farmers as an assuming heroes. Research says that only 55.4% of farmers have received support from NGOs and government and 9.4% farmers have not accessed any support either from NGOs and government.

ACTIVITIES OF SOME IMPORTANT NGOs

The government of India and state governments are operating community kitchens and giving free ration to poor and homeless people till now but it's not reaching everyone. To complement the state and central governments' efforts countless NGOs along with volunteer groups are working tirelessly to provide food and other essentials to those in dire need. Here are a few non-profits organization who are at the forefront of the ongoing relief effort:

MCKS Food for the Hungry Foundation a non-profit organization based in New Delhi. According to website data accessed on 9 July 2020 to support community in New Delhi during lockdown, they have increased capacity at the MCKS' kitchen by 12x and delivered 400000+ nutritious cooked meals and distributed 4 lakh meals in the form of dry ration to marginalized people and those who don't have accessed to feeding points during the time. Against COVID-19 to provide assistance for migrant population, SAFA & other NGOs including Cry, BGIF, and 15 others are jointly working to help in Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Gurgaon, Delhi, Mumbai and North Karnataka. The frontline fighters in our country against Novel Coronavirus are waste pickers, who make sure towns and cities are clean and garbage-free. But given the nature of their work, they are also among the communities most vulnerable to infections. Pune-based KashtakariPanchayat has arranged a fundraiser to support nearly 7000 workers in Pune and neighboring areas. The funds have used to provide safety kits, gloves, masks, soaps and sanitizers and essentials items like grains, pulse, oil, sugar and tea. Here a summary of KashtakariPanchayat work for waste picker:

 Support Kits for Waste Pickers 		Approx. unit cost	Units per waste picker per month	Cost for one month
Personal Protective Equipment	Soaps/Sanitiser	20	4	80
	Gloves	34	3	102
	Masks	50	2	100
Ration	Jowar	30	5 kg	150
	Wheat	30	5 kg	150
	Rice	35	5 kg	175
	Pulses	140	2 kg	280
	Legumes	200	1 kg	200
	Sugar	30	5 kg	150
	Tea	480	0.5 kg	240
	Oil	120	5 l	600
PPE + Ration Kit for one wastepicker				2227

Source: KashtakariPanchayat website, accessed on 8 July 2020.

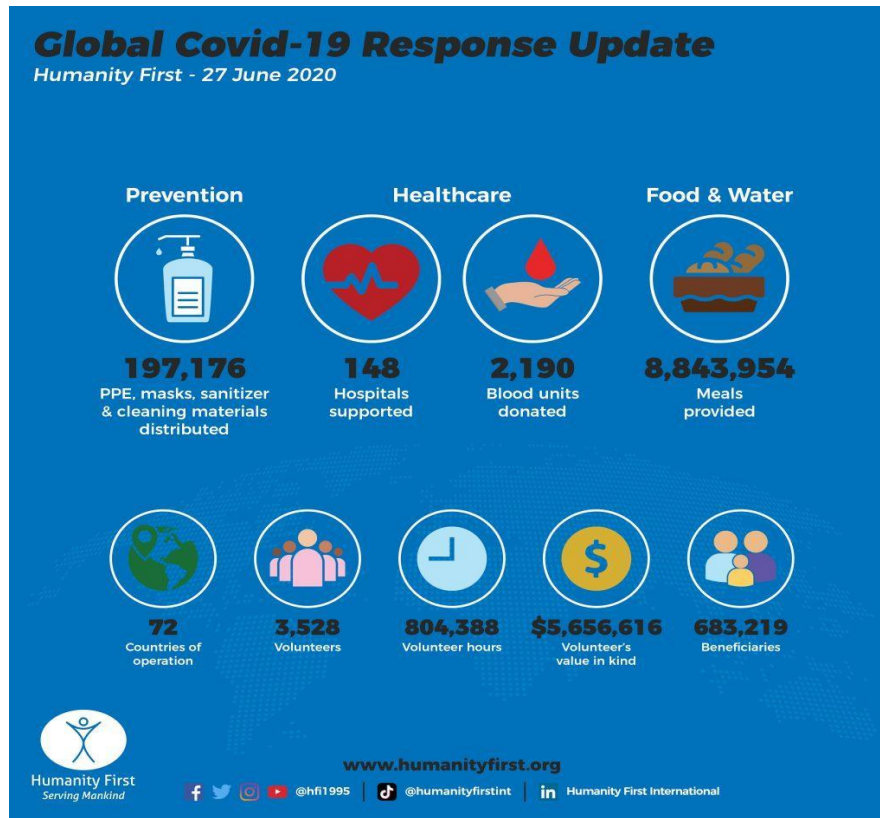
CARE, a global humanitarian organization, is working with partners across over 100 countries helping the most marginalized women and girls in the fight on COVID-19. CARE India has a 1400+ team working with Government of Bihar in supporting the government in contact tracing, monitoring, infection control, laboratory and hospital strengthening for fight COVID-19. From the first phase lockdown, AkshayaPatra Foundation, in close coordination with state governments and district administration, has stepped in to provide relief by

providing food to thousands of people across the country. According to AkshayaPatra website accessed on 10 July has begun its relief service by providing meal or dry ration poor support to people. Summary of AkshayaPatra Foundation efforts to fight the painful lockdown:

STATES	CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF MEALS & GROCERY KITS (AS ON 8 Jul 2020)
Rajasthan	84,15,949 meals & 10,960 kits
Gujarat	71,37,864 meals & 1,500 kits
NCR	46,04,838 meals & 81,283 kits
Uttar Pradesh	12,99,400 meals & 54,999 kits
Karnataka	22,85,580 meals & 3,46,683 kits
Maharashtra	5,11,732 meals & 43,481 kits
Chhattisgarh	5,53,495 meals & 2,142 kits
Odisha	3,000 meals & 15,120 kits
Telangana	15,83,524 meals & 81,385 kits
Andhra Pradesh	1,41,323 meals & 29,866 kits
Assam	14,225 kits
Tamil Nadu	2,18,717 meals & 2,850 kits
Madhya Pradesh	15,000 kits
Uttarakhand	15,240 kits
Tripura	2,449 kits
West Bengal	1,000 kits
Punjab	1,000 kits
Jharkhand	2,480 kits
Himachal Pradesh	1,000 kits
TOTAL	2,67,55,422 MEALS & 7,22,663 KITS

Source: AkshayaPatra Foundation website, Accessed on 10 July 2020.

Under programmeRahat non-governmental organization Goonj provided kits with essentials such as dry rations and personal care products, and arranged transport for migrant labor to over a million people in areas. Goonj worked in 24 states/UTs with 280+ partner fought against the painful Cyclone Amphan and Cyclone Nisarga in time of COVID. More than 10 million people were impacted just by two disasters with Pandemic. Goonj has reached out to relief to many cyclone hit families. On the other hand an important NGO Clothes Box Foundation has launched an initiative to distribute food grains and sanitize kits to those who are worst hit by COVID-19 and lockdown. In this painful situation we show thousands of NGOs provided many assistance for poor and helpless people as an unassuming heroes. Humanity First team has helped with donating grocery items, masks, sanitizers, gloves and drinking water etc. Here a summary according to website data of Humanity first:



Source: <http://www.humanityfirst.org>

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, Khushiyaan Foundation has been providing meals to children, daily wage earner, security guards and laborers through the ‘Roti Ghar’ project around Mumbai, Thane, Airoli, Bhiwandi, Delhi, Bangalore and Hyderabad.

In the pandemic situation, under the project Samarpan COVID-19, Paras India provided fruits, food packets, sanitizers, basic medicines, facemasks among the marginal communities. They also provided sanitary napkins to women in urban slums of Delhi and have started English Communicative Skill Programme for the kids from the urban slums who are missing out on their classes in the schools for lockdown. We saw another picture in Assam, approximately 73 NGOs were worked for providing relief to stranded and marginalized people across the city of Kamrup (metropolitan) but there was no direct government assistance to this organization either in cash and essential items.

There are thousands of NGOs working in India since 22 March, the day of Janata Curfew took an important role to recover our society from a dangerous situation. Activities of some important NGOs selected randomly.

Name of the NGO	Location	Supportive role against COVID-19
Indian Centre For Development & Right (ICFDR)	Delhi, Bareilly, Pune, Lucknow, Chennai, Badaun, Dehradun, Jaipur, Itanagar.	Distributing essential ration kits and mask.
NexharvestSheherikaran Gram Utthaan Forum	Pan India	Execution of healthy and smart habitation zones
SOUL	West Bengal, Kolkata, Jhargram	Providing meals
Wishes and Blessings	Assam, Bihar, UP, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand	Supplied hygiene, shelter, nutrition
Spreading Happiness	Hyderabad, Telangana	Donate grocery kits, Sanitizers and Masks
17000 ft Foundation	Leh, Kargil, UT of Ladakh	Generating awareness, Supplied hygiene kits
Oxfam India	Dilhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Gujarat, Bihar, Telangana	Provided food, PPE, hygiene kits

National Hawker Federation(NHF)	Delhi, Kolkata, Bhubaneswar, Ranchi, Itanagar, Mumbai, Nagpur, Hyderabad	Supplied dry ration
Chikka Federation	Muzaffarour (Bihar)	Provided meals, Generated awareness.

Source: developed by researcher from various NGO websites

VI. CONCLUSION

It is imperative to emphasize, and not just during COVID-19, that NGOs have played a critical role in times of emergencies. Their role in alleviating hardships faced by most underprivileged people in the country is well known. According to JamilahMahmood “NGOs network are equally important actors in preparedness programmes. There are many lessons to be taken from the role of NGOs and their networks in disaster preparedness.” So government and regional community must need to concede the tremendous role of NGOs in India during lockdown situations because they are playing a significant role in helping large sections of Indian society to come out from a vicious Pandemic. On the one hand the voluntary sector is best placed to be a conscience-keeper for programme of government and other to be the voice of the disadvantaged.

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ShamsherRahaman. “The Tremendous Role of Non-Government Organizations in Lockdown Situation of India.” *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention (IJHSSI)*, vol. 09(8), 2020, pp 11-19. Journal DOI- 10.35629/7722