

# MEASURES TO IMPROVE ESSENTIAL SERVICES IN METRO CITIES FOR MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS



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TISS COVID-19 RESPONSE

### **Current Difficulties faced by marginalised communities living in slums:**

- 1) Inadequate availability of food grains at ration shops
- 2) Only wheat or rice is available – people need to visit multiple times which is resulting in forming long queues and overcrowding; hence, social distancing cannot be followed
- 3) Priority groups - APL (Above Poverty Line) families are equally in need of rations
- 4) Migrants who do not have local ration cards (they have ration cards at their native places) are unable to avail PDS services
- 5) Large numbers of people do not have ration cards
- 6) NT-DNT communities are most vulnerable
- 7) According to Govt. of Maharashtra guidelines, ration card holders need to purchase rations first, only then are they eligible to avail free rations in second round
- 8) According to ration shop owners, they do not have enough space to store stock
- 9) Take Home Rations (THR) which was earlier provided to children under the age of 6 years, pregnant women and lactating mothers through ICDS is not being provided.
- 10) Many people literally do not have any money to purchase subsidised rations from rationing shops
- 11) People are unable to purchase medicines due to lack of money
- 12) People are unable to purchase vegetables and milk
- 13) Overcrowding is happening at public toilets

### **Recommendations**

#### **Food Related**

- 1) Ration stocks should be provided to all rationing shops on immediate basis.
- 2) Local municipal schools can be used as store houses for ration stocks.
- 3) Municipal schools and election offices can be developed as temporary rationing shops for those who do not have local ration cards, no ration cards and APL families. The local NGOs as well as Self Help Group Federations could be entrusted responsibilities of temporary rationing shops set up at municipal schools and election offices.
- 4) Subsidised or free medicines should be provided from such temporary ration shops.
- 5) Rice should be made available in abundant quantity as people are unable to grind wheat as flour mills are closed, while rice can be used to prepare paste for children.
- 6) Once temporary rationing shops are installed, we can think of hotline for people in need, as availability of rationing stock is a major issue now. Currently there is a helpline 1800221292 for homeless and stranded labour.
- 7) Community kitchens can be set up at municipal schools
- 8) Take Home Rations should be released for children under the age of 6, pregnant women and lactating mothers.
- 9) People without ration cards should also be considered to provide at least Rs. 500/- per family so that they can purchase vegetables, medicines and milk.
- 10) Local private grocery shops may be directed to offer food grains to people without ration cards on credit.
- 11) NGOs and volunteers could help for loading and unloading rationing stock as there are no or less labour available for loading and unloading.

- 12) Cooked food can be distributed to homeless, security guards, people stuck at railway stations, and bus stops with the help of NGOs and SHG federations.

#### **Shelter Related**

- 13) Monitoring quality of services being provided for homeless people in temporary shelters created in municipal schools can be done by setting up Monitoring Committees at the Ward Level incorporating municipal officials and NGOs.
- 14) Women's shelter homes should allow destitute women to get entry instead of creating entry barriers as is presently happening (get medical certificate, get admitted at Kasturba Hospital for 14 days first, etc.). If necessary, create quarantine ward in the shelter home where new entrants can stay for 14 days.

#### **Health and Sanitation Related**

- 15) Mobile Medical Vans (vehicles carrying generic medicines) should be sent to slum areas and remote locations so that people can purchase medicines at their locations at low cost.
- 16) Medical shops should be directed to offer medicines to poor people on credit
- 17) Mobile toilets should be installed across locations where migrants and homeless people are staying.
- 18) Drinking water should be provided through water tankers at various locations, especially locations where homeless people are staying.

#### **Networking Related**

- 19) There are many philanthropic organisations and individual donors willing to provide food grains to needy people. A data base can be prepared for such organisations. All donations in the form of food grains can be stored at temporary rationing shops and made available to eligible people as mentioned above.
- 20) NGOs / CBOs / SHGs have their presence in almost all slum settlements across the city. A network of all such registered NGOs / CBOs / SHGs can be prepared to collect information on homeless, people without ration cards, disabled, widowed, malnourished children, beggars, NT-DNTs, APL families, minorities and all such vulnerable populations.
- 21) NGOs/CBOs/SHGs willing to come forward to help people in distress should be facilitated to get e-passes by the police through an easy and online process.

*Note Prepared by TANDA, a field action project of TISS.*