COVID-19 PANDEMIC INTERVENTION

As per World Health Organization (WHO), COVID-19 is an infectious disease that is mainly **spreads through droplets from coughing and sneezing of an infected person**. People infected will experience "mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness." With the world count reaching to 9, 00,000 people and more than 45,000 casualties as of 02.04.20, the virus is continuing to effect people with no cure in view. In India, the cases have risen over 1900 and 50 casualties. India is particularly vulnerable due to a large migrant and labor percentage and high density low income settlements. As per US based study of health systems on 24.03.20, the infected population of India could reach up to 1.3 million by mid- May. Since the transmission is human to human, governments all over the world have imposed strict regulations. The Indian government has imposed a 21 day complete lockdown with access open only to essential services which include food, medicines, banking etc.

In the wake of the recent Pandemic- COVID-19 which has the world gripped with its high transmission rate and rising number of casualties, there are a number of safety measures one needs to practice to battle against it. As per WHO, one needs to –

1. Wash hands frequently (for a min of 20 seconds with soap and water or use an alcohol based rub with alcohol percentage above 60)
2. Practice social distancing (Min distance of 1m or 3ft between individuals)
3. Avoid touching one's eyes, nose and mouth (To avoid contamination by hands as they can pick up virus through any surface)
4. Practice respiratory hygiene (Cough, sneeze into a tissue and dispose or cover your nose and mouth in your bent elbow)
5. Seek early medical help if one has fever, cough and breathing difficulty.
6. Stay informed and follow advice given by healthcare workers

To lower the spread of the infection and generate awareness among low-income communities on COVID-19 (about, symptoms, causes and its prevention), CURE with the support of state governments has been using IT actively through WhatsApp in the form of music jingle, GIF's, poems, comics, helpline numbers, information images and videos to be circulated in various groups. As WASH through handwashing practices is one of the key components of fighting the virus, CURE is encouraging communities to frequently wash hands in a day. Bars of soap are also being made available to help fight the virus.

Figure 1Use of graphics for awareness generation

Till now, CURE has reached 88 community groups such as self-help groups and others in 7 cities with a total number of 2235 people (refer table 1 for city-wise details). A self-help group in Dharamshala, is also involved in making masks at the request of the Dharamshala Municipal Corporation (DMC). Another

group in Agra is volunteering in distribution of ration. Youth groups via digital platform are voluntarily working towards encouraging people to stay indoors.

Figure 2 Initiative by community groups

Table 1 City-wise outreach

S.no.	City	No. of community groups	Total no. of members
1	Shahjahanpur	10	97
2	Dharamshala	7	488
3	Jaipur	7	42
4	Agra	12	406
5	Delhi	48	1130
6	Ghaziabad	3	47
7	Shamli	1	25
Total		**88**	**2235**

CURE has also mapped out nearest centres distributing ration to the poor and locations of Mohala clinic for increased accessibility if medical attention is required. Important information from Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) website on safety measures with respect to wearing masks, awareness on social distancing and handwashing is also being shared.

Figure 3 MoHFW