

Establishing response mechanism to address pandemic challenges at the community level

Speaker: Maya Sasidharan

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Individual Profile:

Maya Sasidharan belongs to Aiswarya Kudumbashree, Ward No.XIV, Keezhmadu Gramapanchayath Kudumbashree CDS, Vazhakkulam Block, Ernakulam District. Since 2000, she has been working with Kudumbashree as NHG secretary, ADS chairperson, CDS chairperson, Ashraya and GenderRP, Awake HRD training institute (Kudumbashree training) Secretary, and Kudumbashree NRO MCG. She learnt the use of technologies and various languages through travelling.

Currently she is engaged with covid -19 prevention and protection activities. She narrates her personal tale wherein due to the crisis, the companies were laying off the employees and her son lost his job in March, 2020. Unexpected job loss was a shock for the family. Following to this, her son again initiated job search by sending his CV to companies and it found it challenging to get an opportunity. After seven months, a company in Dubai accepted his resume and sent the flight ticket for joining. As RTPCR test was mandatory for travel, her son undergone the test and the result was positive. He lost his opportunity. In this context, he underwent online course and updated his CV and again started sending to different company. Due to his continuous effort, he got another job offer in UAE but all went vain when UAE banned Indian flights just two days before his travel.

Community context:

Unacceptance in the community, loneliness, stress, financial crisis etc. caused to lose our confidence. Due to lockdown and fear of contracting the disease people did not step out much in the market place. But the Panchayath and Kudumbashree helped the community.

Some of the steps taken by the Panchayath includes

- (i) War room, help desk, and rapid response team (RRT) were in touch with the community by enquiring our requirements;
- (ii) RRT was with us for giving all support such as pulse oximeter, ambulance, medicine, etc;
- (iii) Kudumbashree KRT team sensitized us how to be hygienic, how to use mask and on waste management of covid patients and how to protect the covid patient at home;
- (iv) E-sanjeevani telemedicine facility helped us to consult the doctor through virtual platform;
- (v) ADS collected food from Community Kitchen and they served it two times per day continuously for 10 days.They also supported us to buying groceries and ration from shops. Every family getting sufficient food items including 9-10 items through PDS system;
- (vi) Through tele calling, Snehitha was always with us for psychological support;
- (vii) Pension for the beneficiaries without any due have been received by the eligible community members.
- (viii) State Government supported community members by giving Covid loan through NHG, with interest subsidy, and Maya received 20 thousand from the total resource pool. I used it for the updation of my Son's course and travel.

Kudumbashree, Panchayath, health department, Snehitha Gender help desk, politicians, voluntary workers, etc. worked together to prevent and protect the community from Covid-19. Mass vaccination camps and sensitization programs arranged by Kudumbashree and Panchayath.

Community kitchen and People's Hotel started functioning for providing free/subsidy rate food for the needy families including beggars, guest workers from other states, and its fully sponsored by the community. The people who can't celebrate birthdays, marriages also sponsored money and materials to the panchayath and it was so useful for the functioning of community kitchen.