

PRESS RELEASE:

STRENGTHENED DIGITAL RELIEF PROGRAM TO HANDLE PANDEMIC SITUATION

COVID-19 Digital Emergency Relief Program (CDERP) 3.0 under Digital Empowerment Foundation is an ongoing relief program as a response to COVID-19 tackling social, mental and physical health, livelihood and awareness aspects of the pandemic.

New Delhi , 2022 -

Digital Empowerment Foundation has been testing and improvising the relief program that is prepared to handle any pandemic situation. As a continued effort, CDERP 3.0 is the next step in this direction following a similar framework that proved to be effective under [CDERP 2.0](#).

The Covid-19 pandemic has unimaginably affected social, economic, institutional and governance settings worldwide. It has generated an unparalleled health crisis globally, affecting thousands of people and threatening health systems and services. It has forced over 3 billion people to be locked at home. Covid-19 could put great stress on societies and political systems, thereby creating the potential for violent outbreaks. Early signs of social disorder are already visible. (International Crisis Group – ICG, Report, March 25, 2020).

Covid-19 has posed a huge health crisis and endemic situation in India. It is affecting the country's social, economic, services delivery, demand-supply and governance chains and network and crisis management. Livelihood, work, income and security have been disrupted especially for the poor, vulnerable and people living in rural and remote communities due to lack of information, resources and support system.

Another challenge that has emerged from this situation is the reverse migration of workers from cities. While the whole physical network, interactions, engagements have come to a standstill, it is the digital resources, platforms, solutions and networks that has and can act as a major support mechanism in this crisis.

The program evolved to address four challenges that were highlighted from the ground; lack of physical and mental health awareness about Covid-19, spread of misinformation, fake news and panic created; lack of information, data, linkages, guidance and facilitation related to public entitlements and resources and livelihood and income strains and access to opportunities.

The approach has been to launch an ICT-enabled and community specific relief programme through virtual community and service facilitation with the help of 600+ digitally enabled information resource centers and 10,000+ foot soldiers, trained as COVID Soochnapreneurs across 25 states and union territories.

The beneficiaries include the general public, elderly and differently abled people, pregnant women and lactating mothers, frontline workers, daily wagers and migrant workers who received help in the areas of public schemes, welfare measure information, entitlement facilitation and delivery, support tele-health & tele-medicine, internet support, alternate livelihood opportunities in times of distress, consultation and counselling.

The potential impact is to reach out to 1000 locations with COVID-19 virtual community and service facilitation access for telemedicine consultation and vaccine registration in 135 districts and 24 States providing COVID prevention necessities (masks, sanitizers, dry ration & other products like sanitary pads, milk packs etc.), mitigating rumours, fake news, misinformation / disinformation on COVID-19/ COVID 19 appropriate behaviours/ health & nutrition and vaccination and increasing awareness, knowledge & understanding of people on COVID-19 appropriate behaviour, vaccine hesitancy and eagerness and sensitive behaviour.

The progress will be monitored with the help of MeraApp, an Android-based app developed by Digital Empowerment Foundation using cutting edge technology which provides rural India's vulnerable population with a catalogue of welfare schemes, with comprehensive information on entitlements.

For further information, please contact:

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Digital Empowerment Foundation

DEF is registered as a not-for-profit organisation under the Indian Societies Registration Act, 1860, to carry out this mission of empowering people digitally. DEF constantly acts in the creation of information empowerment, equitable communities by providing digital access to information, knowledge and contextual capacity. Details at <https://defindia.org/>