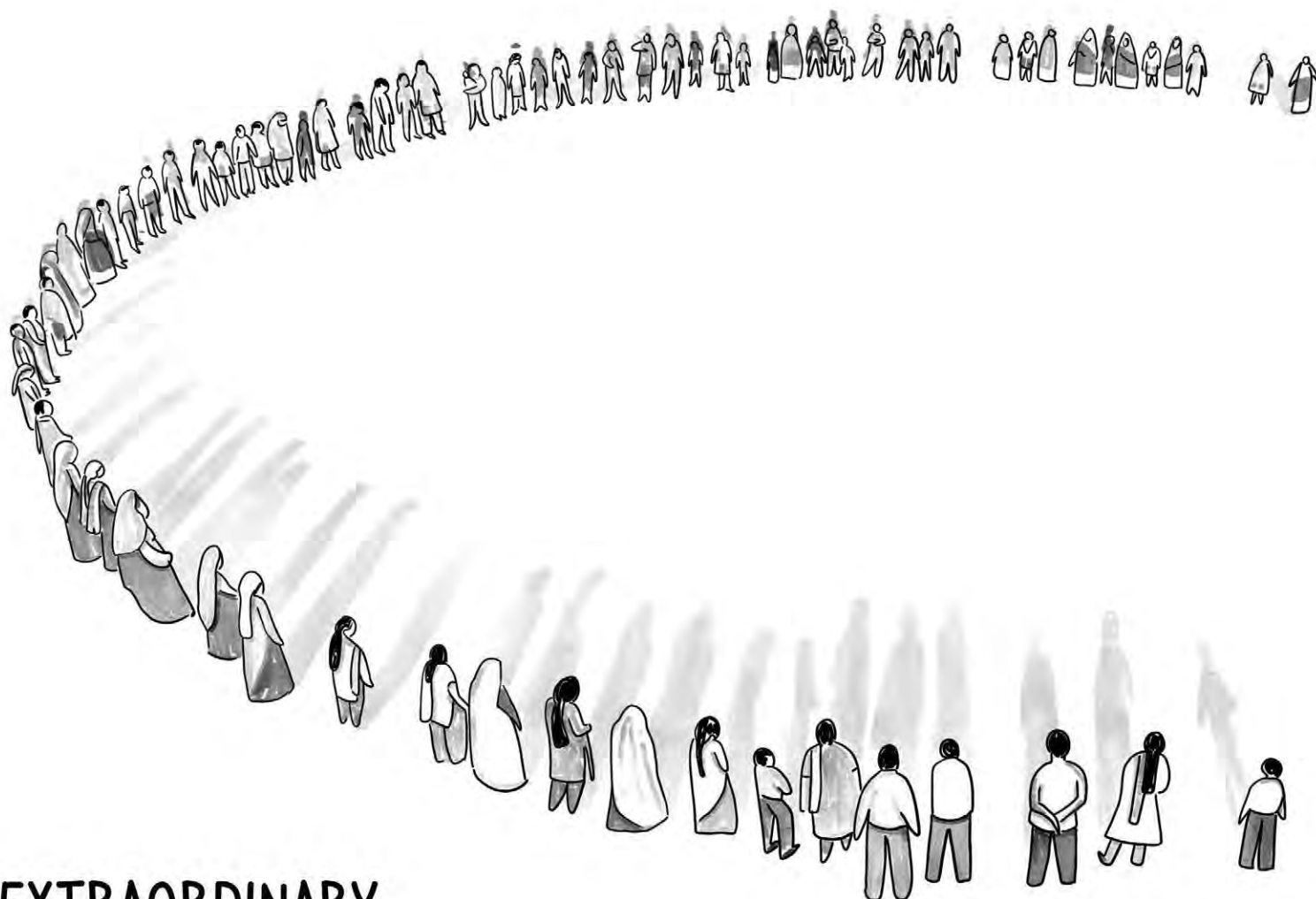


VOL. 1 | AUGUST 2020



VIKALP SANGAM



# EXTRAORDINARY WORK OF 'ORDINARY' PEOPLE (A GRAPHIC NOVEL VERSION)

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## BEYOND PANDEMICS AND LOCKDOWNS

Examples, lessons, and specific  
recommendations for communities, civil society  
organisations, and government agencies

This graphic novel by Poorva Goel is an adaptation of a document produced by Vikalp Sangam in August 2020, available at <http://vikalpsangam.org/article/extraordinary-work-of-ordinary-people-beyond-pandemics-and-lockdowns/>. Inputs for this version were given by Ashish Kothari, Juhi Pandey, Sangeetha Sriram and Sujatha Padmanabhan.

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Vikalp Sangam is a platform to bring together movements, groups and individuals working on just, equitable and sustainable pathways to human and ecological well-being. It rejects the current model of development and the structures of inequality and injustice underlying it, and searches for alternatives in practice and vision. About 60 movements and organisations around the country are members of its Core Group (listed below). For more information please see:

For more information please see: <http://www.vikalpsangam.org/about/>



- ACCORD (Tamil Nadu)
- Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture (National)
- Alternative Law Forum (Bengaluru)
- Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (Bengaluru)
- BHASHA (Gujarat)
- Bhoomi College (Bengaluru)
- Blue Ribbon Movement (Mumbai)
- Centre for Education and Documentation (Mumbai)
- Centre for Environment Education (Gujarat)
- Centre for Equity Studies (Delhi)
- CGNetSwara (Chhattisgarh)
- Chalakudy Puzha Samrakshana Samithi / River Research Centre (Kerala)
- ComMutiny: The Youth Collective (Delhi)
- Deccan Development Society (Telangana)
- Deer Park (Himachal Pradesh)
- Development Alternatives (Delhi)
- Dharamitra (Maharashtra)
- Ekta Parishad (several states)
- Ektha (Chennai)
- EQUATIONS (Bengaluru)
- Gene Campaign (Delhi)
- Greenpeace India (Bengaluru)
- Health Swaraaj Samvaad (national)
- Ideosync (Delhi)
- Jagori Rural (Himachal Pradesh)
- Kalpavriksh (Maharashtra)
- Knowledge in Civil Society (national)
- Kriti Team (Delhi)
- Ladakh Arts and Media Organisation (Ladakh)
- Local Futures (Ladakh)
- Maati (Uttarakhand)
- Mahila Kisan Adhikar Manch (national)
- Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (Rajasthan)
- National Alliance of Peoples' Movements (national)
- Nirangal (Tamil Nadu)
- North East Slow Food & Agrobiodiversity Society (Meghalaya)
- Peoples' Science Institute (Uttarakhand)
- Revitalising Rainfed Agriculture Network (national)
- reStore (Chennai)
- Sahjeevan (Kachchh)
- Sambhaavnaa (Himachal Pradesh)
- Samvedana (Maharashtra)
- Sangama (Bengaluru)
- Sangat (Delhi)
- School for Democracy (Rajasthan)
- School for Rural Development and Environment (Kashmir)
- Shikshantar (Rajasthan)
- Snow Leopard Conservancy India Trust (Ladakh)
- Social Entrepreneurship Association (Tamil Nadu)
- SOPPECOM (Maharashtra)
- South Asian Dialogue on Ecological Democracy (Delhi)
- Students' Environmental and Cultural Movement of Ladakh (Ladakh)
- Thanal (Kerala)
- Timbaktu Collective (Andhra Pradesh)
- Titli Trust (Uttarakhand)
- Tribal Health Initiative (Tamil Nadu)
- URMUL (Rajasthan)
- Vrikshamitra (Maharashtra)
- Watershed Support Services & Activities Network (Andhra Pradesh/Telangana)

# BREAKING NEWS

The novel coronavirus affects hundreds of millions of Indians.



What will the world look like post COVID?

Will there be big changes in our economic strategies, if so, then what will those be?



DEBATE HOUR @ 9

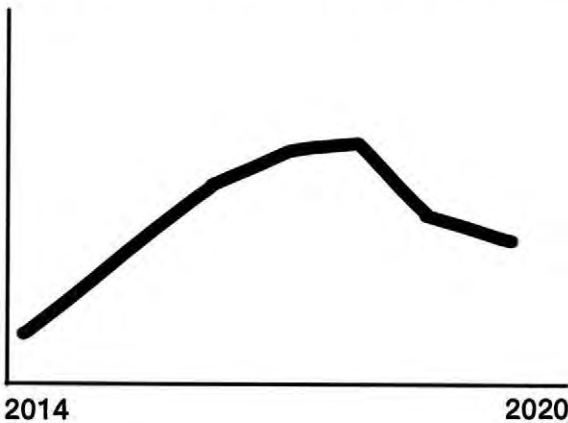
THE BIG QUESTION:

MONDAY | 09:04 PM

## Is the Covid-19 Pandemic the 'Reboot Button'?

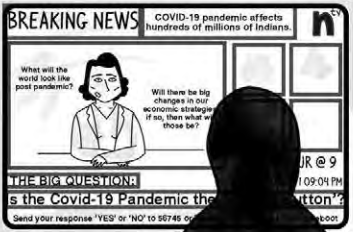
Send your response 'YES' or 'NO' to 56745 or Tweet @NTVPOLLS #CoronaReboot

The only curve that's being flattened is the GDP.



Will the current system survive corona?

What does our panel for tonight's debate have to say?



Wanna bet?

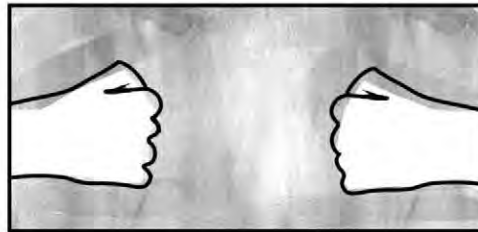
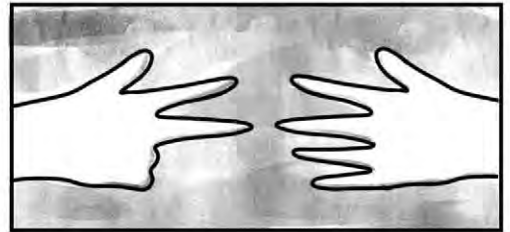






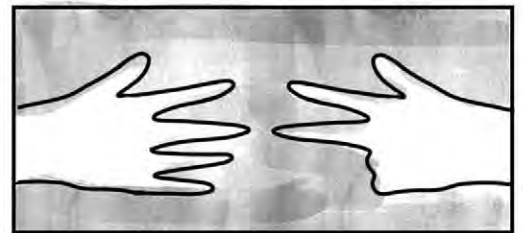
The COVID crisis has sharply exposed the deep fault lines of Indian economy, society & polity.

Millions have been affected by the loss of livelihood.



Covid-19 could kill more people through hunger.

We can't carry on with the existing models of development & governance. We must find alternative pathways & imagine our world anew.



Madam stop your anti-development nonsense.

Keep your urban-naxal agendas to yourself, okay.

One minute madam!

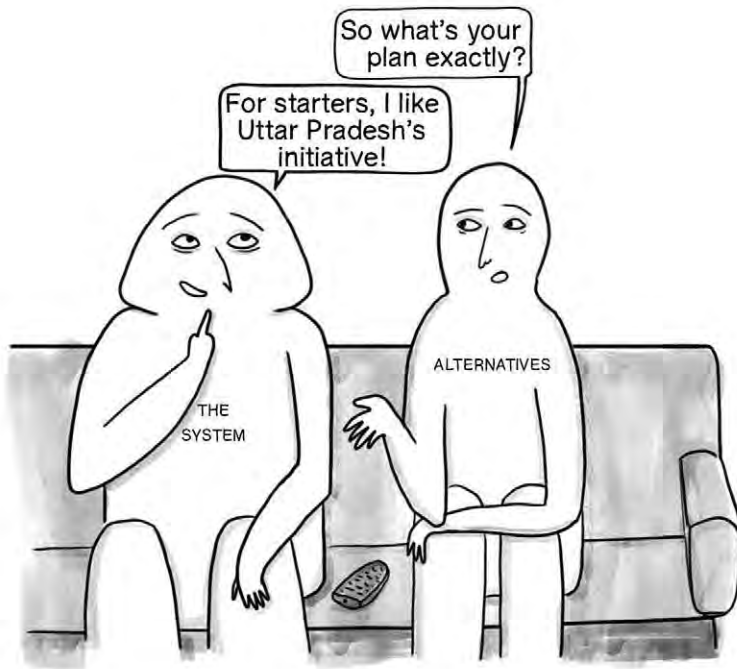
We will bounce back with double the force! India will be number one!



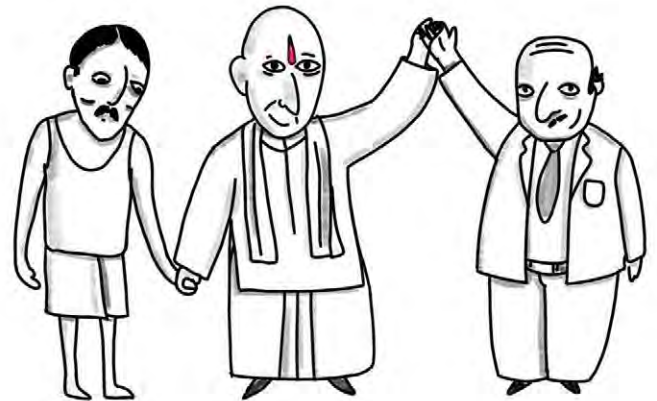
Bigger! Faster! Better!



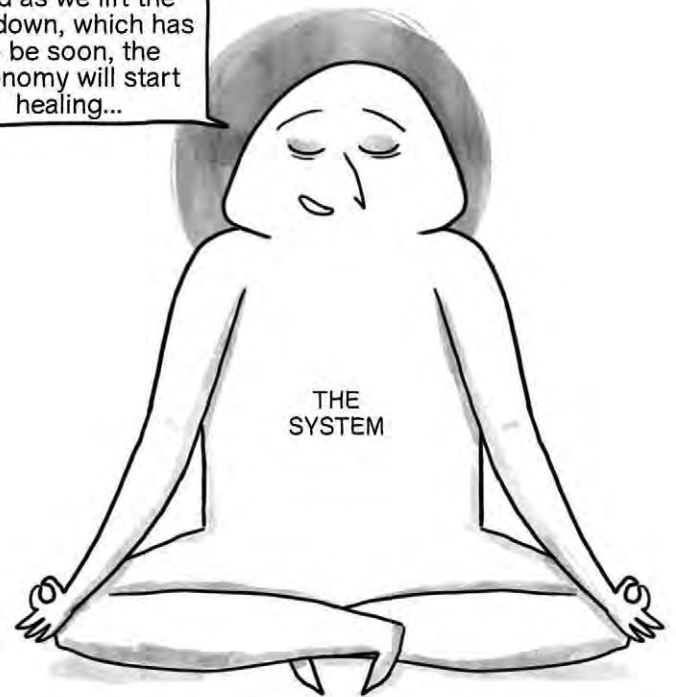




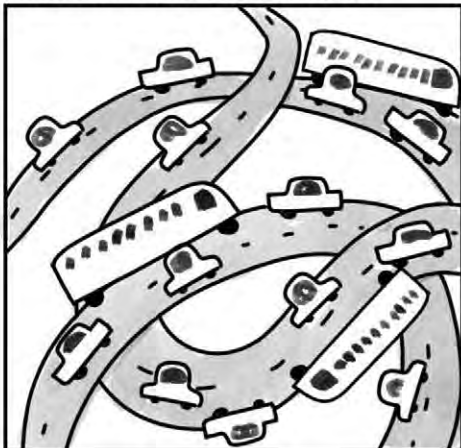
LABOUR LAWS SUSPENDED FOR 3 YEARS IN UP



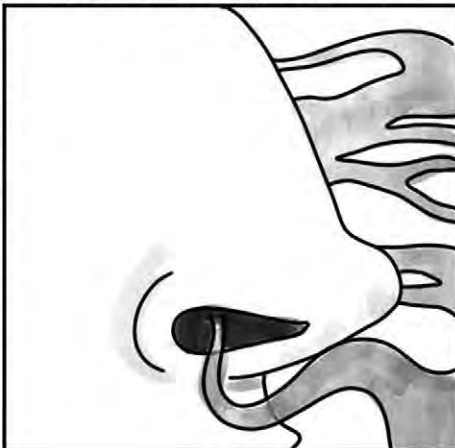
And as we lift the lockdown, which has to be soon, the economy will start healing...



The majestic metallic creatures will return to their natural habitat...

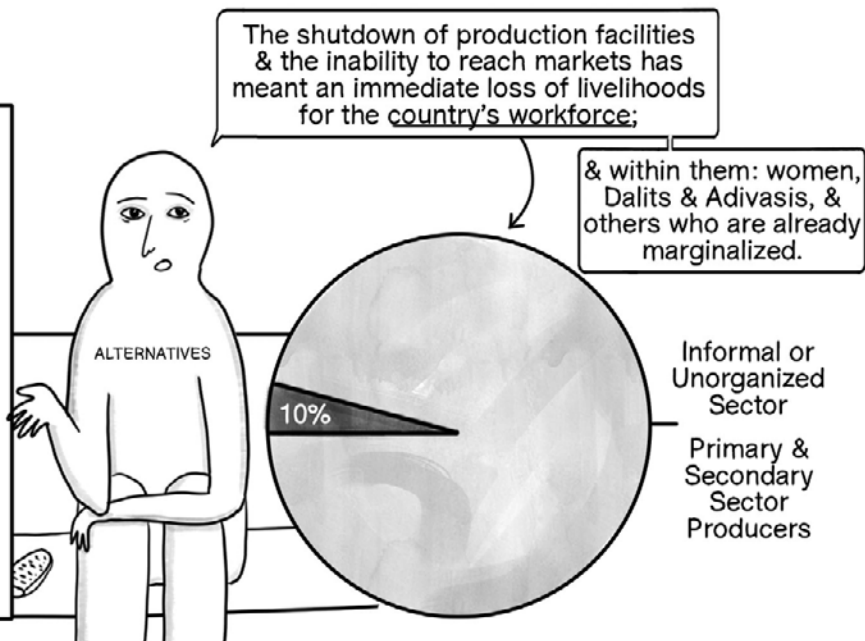


Once again the air will be filled with the sweet smell of toxins..



& the sound of people rushing to their soul crushing jobs.

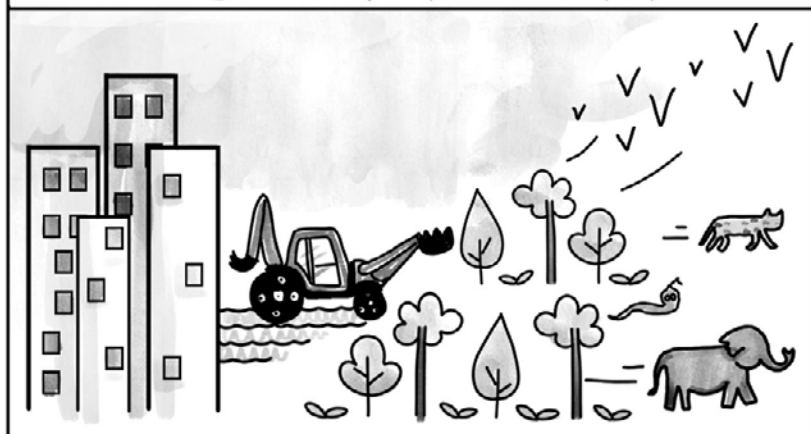




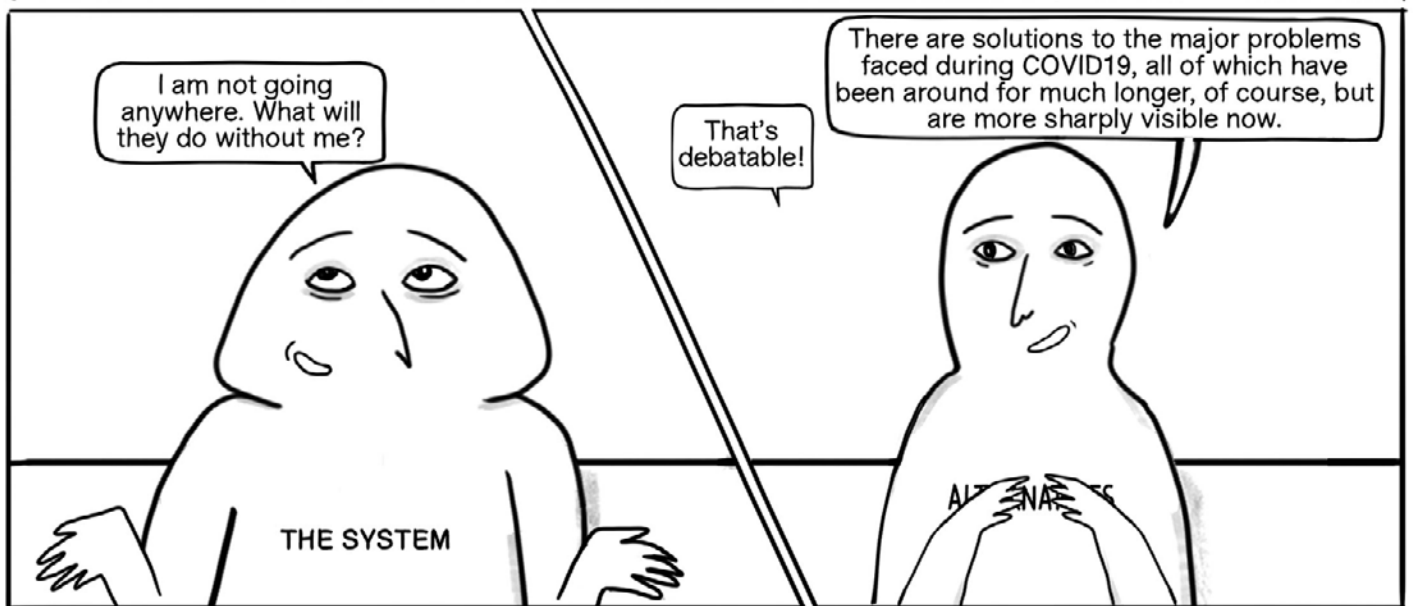
For migrant workers, there is the additional impact of being stuck away from home, & with the sudden shutdown of public transportation, they have been amongst the worst sufferers.



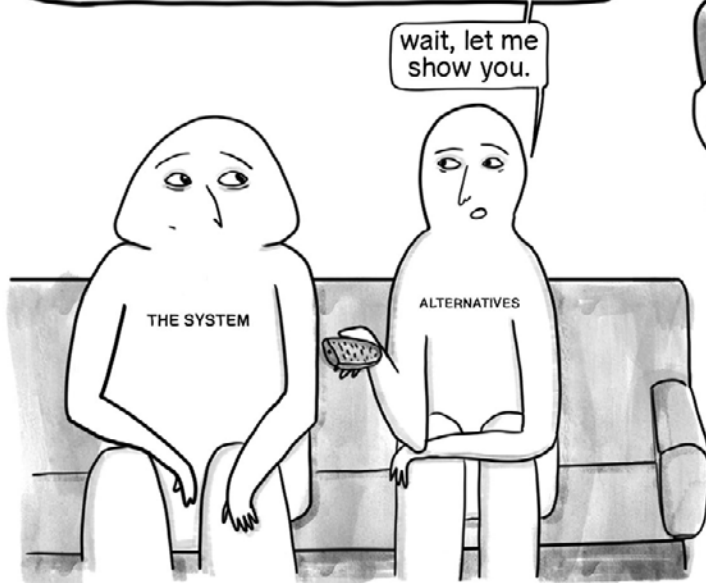
Since you refuse to see your war cry- 'Bigger, Faster, Better' as the reason behind the coronavirus pandemic, this outbreak is not going to be the last of its kind. When a situation like this arises again what is your plan for these people?







They are great examples of communities across the country that have been working towards alternative pathways of well-being, that help generate dignified livelihoods for all, & that help them move towards ecological sustainability.



## DALIT AND ADIVASI WOMEN FARMERS OF DECCAN DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY, TELANGANA

Over the last 25-30 years, several thousand dalit & adivasi (pastoral) women of Zaheerabad district, Telangana, have created an agricultural revolution.



The families of these women who were themselves facing hunger till 3 decades back have had enough food not only for themselves, but also have shared with landless families, donated for district relief measures, and provided 1000 glasses of millet porridge every day to municipality, police & health workers in Zaheerabad town.

Through women's collectives in over 70 villages, and membership of Deccan Development Society, they have:



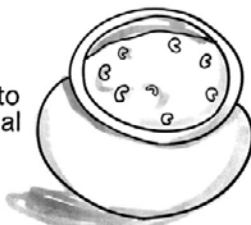
Revived traditional seed & livestock diversity (especially millets) in their dryland fields, turned completely to organic & local inputs.



Created grain banks in each village for easy access, & fought for land rights to women.



In the process, conditions of food insecurity & malnutrition have been transformed into adequacy & nutritional health.



Revived mixed & multiple cropping.



They also run an independent public distribution system to make sure the poor have cheap, nutritious food; & ConFarm, a producer-consumer arrangement with 100 families in Hyderabad.

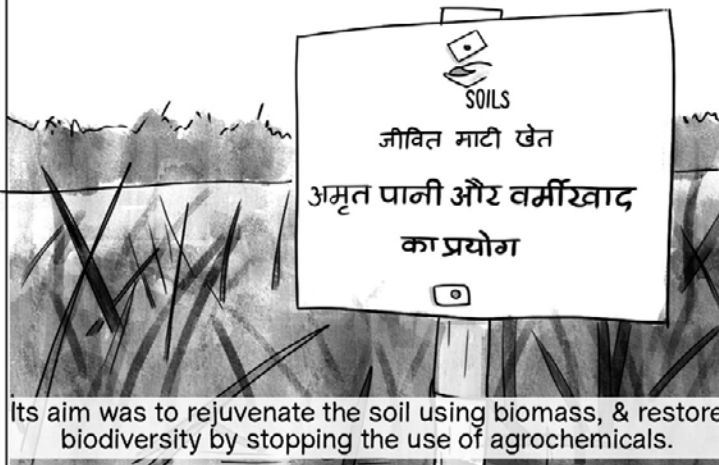


Most importantly, the initiative has given them the dignity they never had in a casteist, gender-inequitable society!



## KEDIA ORGANIC VILLAGE, BIHAR

Kedia village of Jamui, Bihar which includes 97 farmer families, adopted the Living Soils approach of ecological agriculture in 2014.



Its aim was to rejuvenate the soil using biomass, & restore biodiversity by stopping the use of agrochemicals.

Till then, it had been trapped in the cycle of agrochemical company seeds-extensive irrigation-monoculture of rice & wheat, which has affected 'Green Revolution' farmers across India.



The community, in collaboration with Greenpeace India & the state agriculture department transformed their entire farming operations in 4-5 years.



Now they grow all the food they need (except salt & sugar) organically, without using any inputs from outside.

They have rejuvenated open wells, now adequate for household & irrigation purposes round the year, & stopped using borewells.



Importantly, this turn-around is due to changed mindsets of both the farmers & of government officials.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, noticing that livelihoods of daily wage earners & farmers were threatened by the lockdown, it distributed dry rations to 426 families in surrounding villages, which aren't eligible for the government ration distribution programmes. The community engaged with local media, panchayat members, & civil society groups to identify & reach these families.



## SATARA 'DIRECT TO HOME' EXCHANGE DURING COVID-19

With the onset of corona outbreak right after the Rabi harvesting season, farmers in Satara were faced with 2 challenges-

There's no migrant labour to cut & lift the yield.



There are no truck drivers for transport of our produce.

This led to middlemen either not buying their produce or buying them at extremely low prices.

This is all that I can offer you..



Retailer

Something is better than nothing

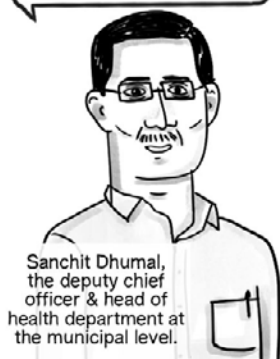
And the response from the Central Government to such situations across the country was thoroughly inadequate.



Satara local administration, along with farmers, local mandi retailers, civil society & social innovators started looking for local solutions.

Corona is making all of us reflect & bring in systems which are for the benefit of the citizens.

This is a great chance for the farmers not just to serve people during the lockdown, but to address a long-term business opportunity where they can build a direct bond with their customers.



Sanchit Dhumal, the deputy chief officer & head of health department at the municipal level.



Avinash Pol, experienced social worker.

Together they figured out the logistics for direct to home delivery for essentials: groceries, milk, vegetables & fruit.



Around 38 farmers in the area, with the support of the Satara municipality, are aggregating their perishable produce, carrying them to select locations, & using loudspeakers to attract attention from families looking for fresh produce.

For farmers, eliminating the middlemen has significantly boosted margins by nearly 40%!

This model is a safer option than overcrowded mandis where physical distancing is practically impossible to enforce.

Permission was secured for the farmers to run a fleet of vans to transport the produce.

Kisaan ko ugaana aata hai, bechna nahi. Corona humein bechna sikha raha hai.



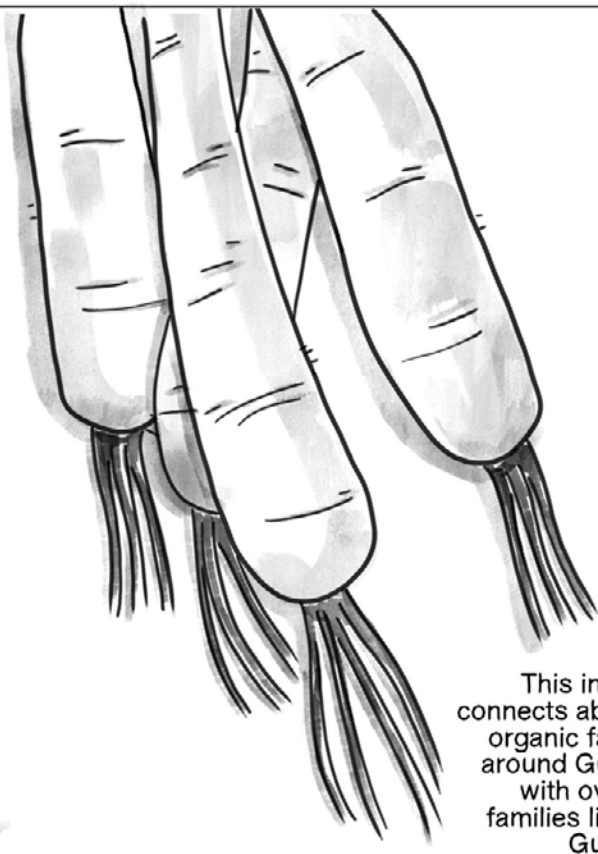


Similar initiatives are taking place in different parts of the country, connecting rural areas with neighbouring villages, towns & cities, with farmers, pastoralists, fishers, forest-dwellers, & craftspersons being facilitated to set up markets where they can directly reach consumers, or where small scale traders & aggregators that have fair practices can set up stalls.

**THE GURGAON ORGANIC FARMERS MARKET** is a weekly market that has run continuously since 2014, & during the lockdown, the market went online, where customers have their baskets door-delivered.




All these years, it has remained a profit free & fully voluntary effort & runs with a charter of ethics.

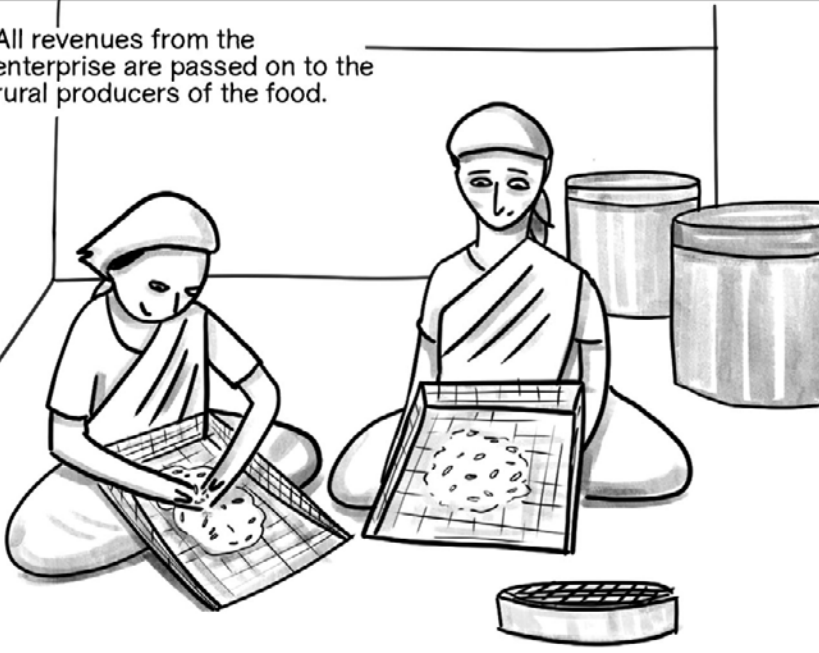


This initiative connects about 20 organic farmers around Gurgaon with over 500 families living in Gurgaon.

**NAVADARSHANAM**, a small community in Tamil Nadu about 50km from Bengaluru, has been exploring alternatives to the modern way of living & thinking, seeking both ecological balance & inner peace. It has experimented in the areas of eco-restoration & wilderness preservation, alternative energy, sustainable organic farming, water harvesting, health & healing, as well as in promoting traditional foods.



In 2017, it launched a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) initiative, which helps local organic farmers plan their operations based on commitments from urban subscribers in Bengaluru for a weekly box of vegetables, fruits & groceries (with ecofriendly packaging).

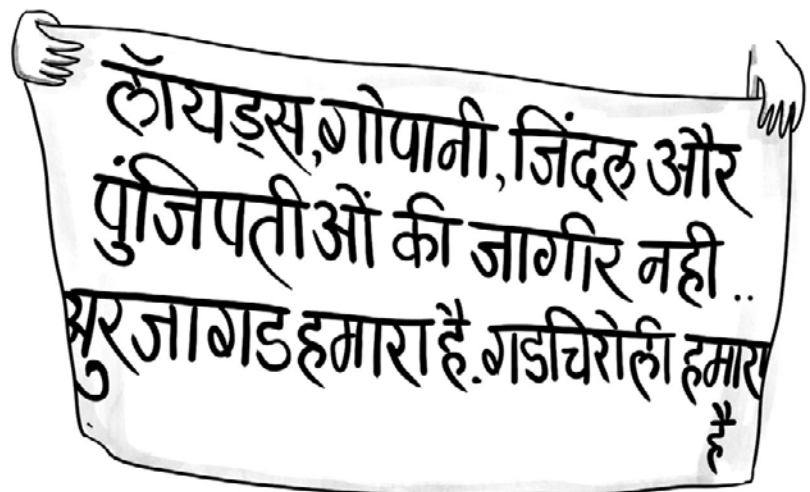


All revenues from the enterprise are passed on to the rural producers of the food.

With very limited market access in the red zones of Bengaluru, urban subscribers have been hugely thankful that the CSA has managed to come through with fresh local organic produce.

## FOREST BASED LIVELIHOODS IN KORCHI, MAHARASHTRA

In north Gadchiroli (Maharashtra), in 2016, 90 gram sabhas (village assemblies) came together to form a federation called the Mahagram Sabha (MGS). This emerged from the need of a forum that could effectively resist mining that threatened their livelihoods, as also create secure local livelihoods.



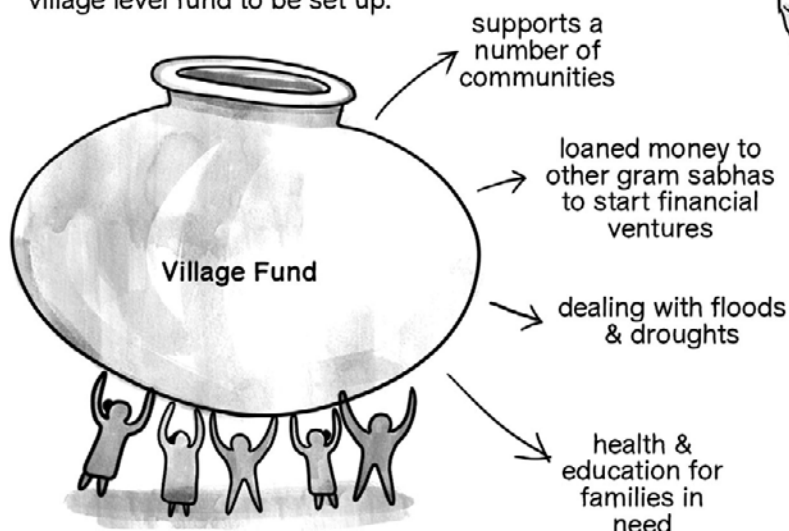
The MGS has been working towards asserting direct democracy, localising the means of production, restoring ecological balance, reviving cultural identity, & challenging gender inequity.

Using the Forest Rights Act 2006 & Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996, 87 of these gram sabhas have gained their rights to govern, use & conserve their forests. This inverts a couple of centuries of centralized government control.



Through all this it is questioning the existing model of development, including conventional systems of health & education in particular as they relate to a predominantly adivasi region.

The collection & trade of non-timber forest produce has enhanced family incomes, & community based forest protection & management. Importantly, it has enabled a village level fund to be set up.



In COVID times, the gram sabhas' ability to earn from their forests has been crucial. Ration kits have been distributed, to landless families, widows, people with disabilities, & migrant labour families.



## KUDUMBASHREE, KERALA

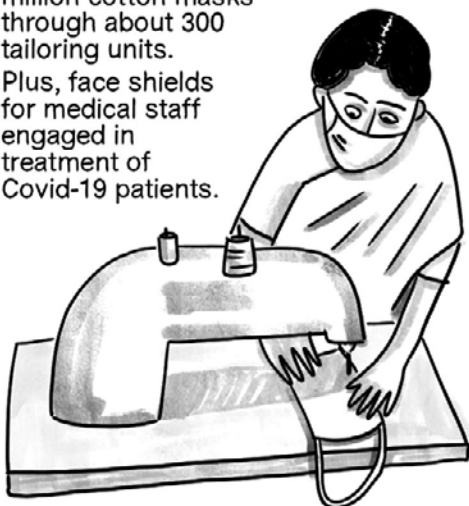
Kudumbashree was launched in 1998 as part of the Kerala State Poverty Eradication Mission. It is a community organization of neighborhood groups of women. Its vision is to empower every woman to be part of local decision-making processes. Government initiatives on food security, health insurance, housing & enterprise development, the National Wage Employment Programme & the Jagratha Samiti depend on Kudumbashree to provide community interface & hence ensure local self-governance.



It promotes diverse forms of production, including household items, agroprocessing, & handicrafts, enabling lakhs of women to earn decent livelihoods in their own settlements.

In times of Covid, Kudumbashree has emerged as an important link between government's relief work & communities. Its members actively participated in disseminating information on Covid awareness, government instructions, connecting people through help lines etc. in villages as well as cities.

Prepared & sold over 2 million cotton masks through about 300 tailoring units. Plus, face shields for medical staff engaged in treatment of Covid-19 patients.



21 micro-enterprise units have prepared nearly 5000 litres of sanitizers.

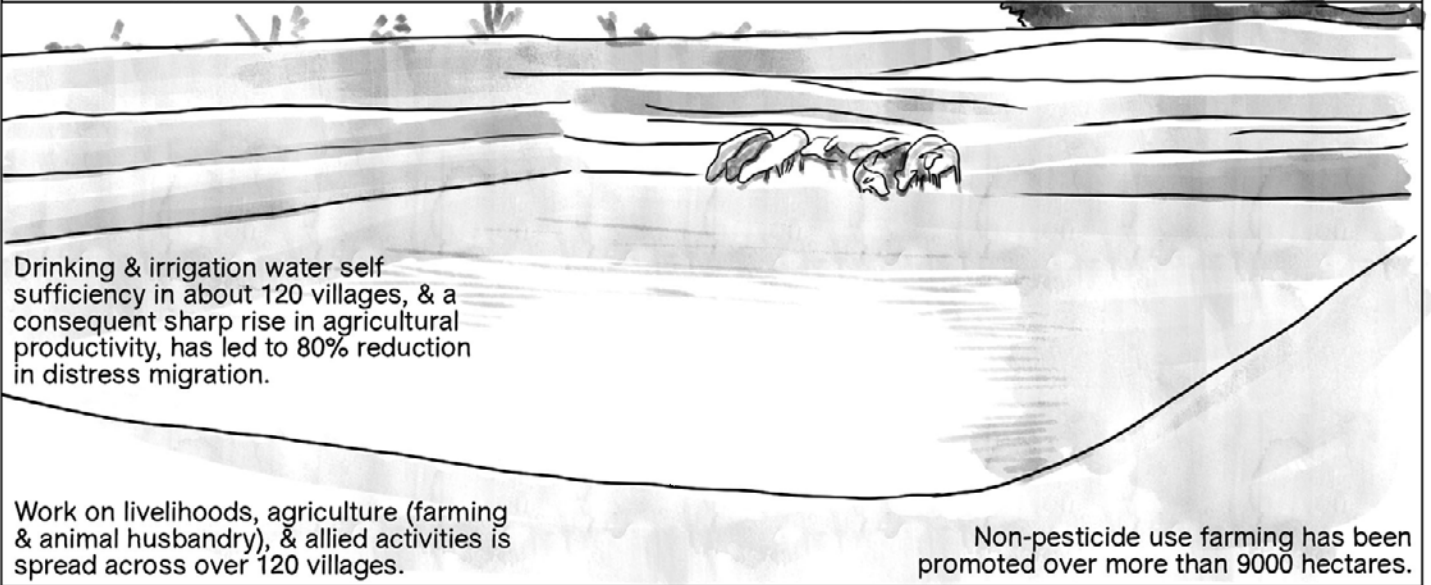


Started community kitchens, where food is prepared & home delivered to those under home quarantine & for those in need.



## LIVELIHOOD AND WATER SECURITY IN CENTRAL INDIA

Headquartered in Dewas, Madhya Pradesh, the Samaj Pragati Sahayog (SPS) work with its partners on a million acres of land across 72 districts in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Equity, sustainability, empowerment, prioritizing the most marginalized including women, are core principles. Much of its work in the last three decades has focused on Adivasi communities, prioritizing decentralized water security as a basis for secure agricultural and other livelihoods.



Drinking & irrigation water self sufficiency in about 120 villages, & a consequent sharp rise in agricultural productivity, has led to 80% reduction in distress migration.

Work on livelihoods, agriculture (farming & animal husbandry), & allied activities is spread across over 120 villages.

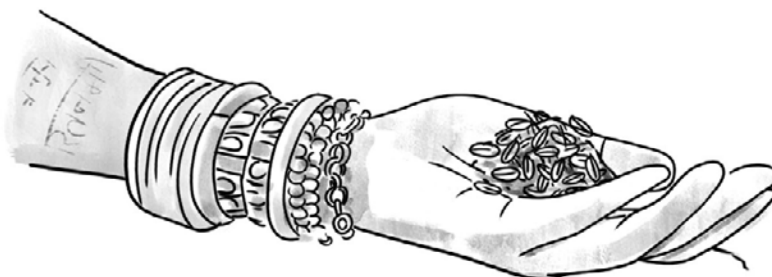
Non-pesticide use farming has been promoted over more than 9000 hectares.

The organizational foundation for the work is women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs), formed in over 500 villages & 15 towns (as of end-2018).

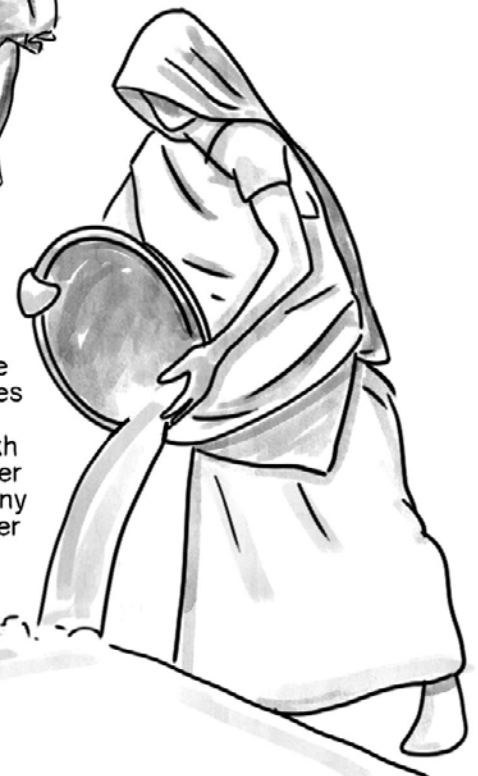


During the COVID crisis, SPS has reached relief to over 13,000 families in Dewas & Khargone districts of MP, with the SHGs centrally involved in identifying the most vulnerable people & in distributing relief packages.

Wheat for this package was procured from several thousand local farmers.



This was made into 118.40 tonnes of wheat flour worth Rs. 38 lakh by another farmer producer company RRPPCL, Another one of their institutional interventions.



Thus, a triple whammy was achieved:

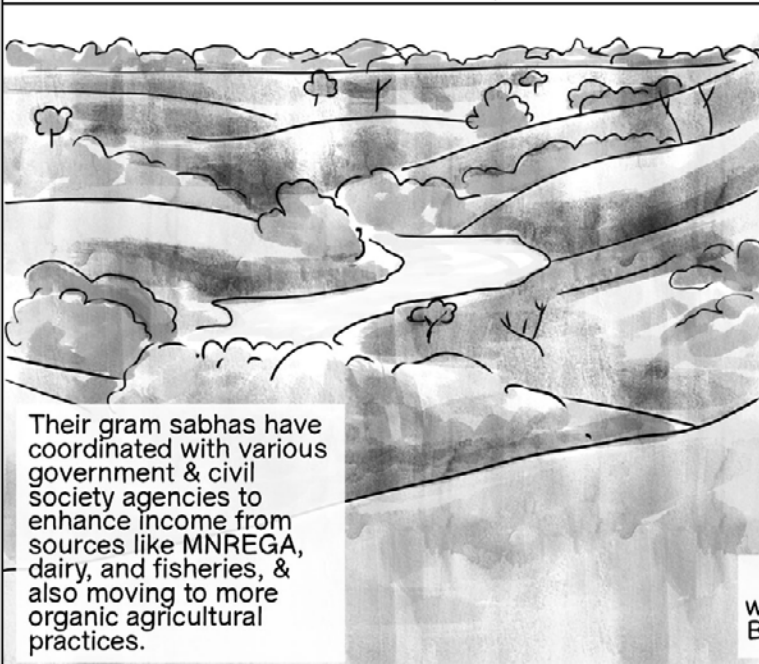
Support to farmers through purchase of wheat at a good rate helped them avoid distress sale in the middle of the lockdown.

Income for farmer shareholders of RRPPCL through sale of wheat flour.

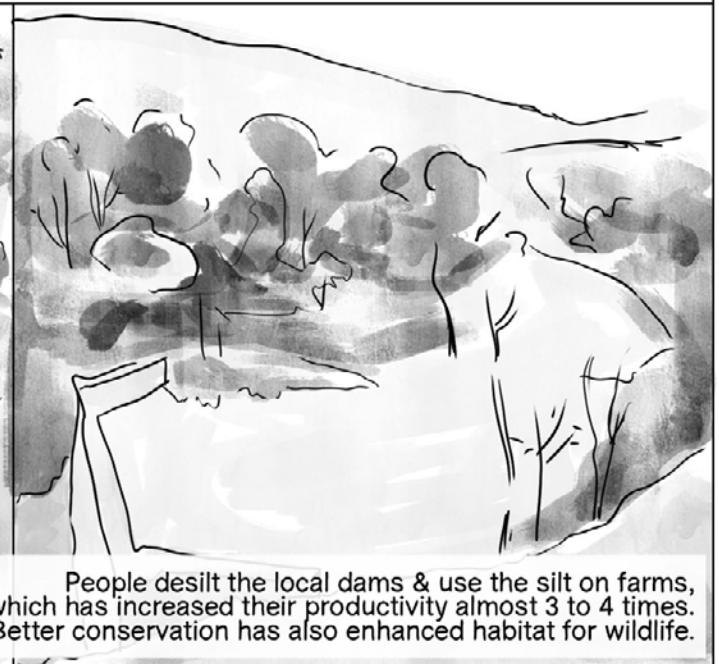
Relief to the most vulnerable families through free supply of the package of essentials.

## VILLAGES WITH FOREST RIGHTS, MELGHAT AREA, MAHARASHTRA

Payvihir & other villages, at the foothills of Melghat in Amravati district of Maharashtra, have championed the conservation of their forests & reforestation of degraded lands after obtaining Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006.



Their gram sabhas have coordinated with various government & civil society agencies to enhance income from sources like MNREGA, dairy, and fisheries, & also moving to more organic agricultural practices.



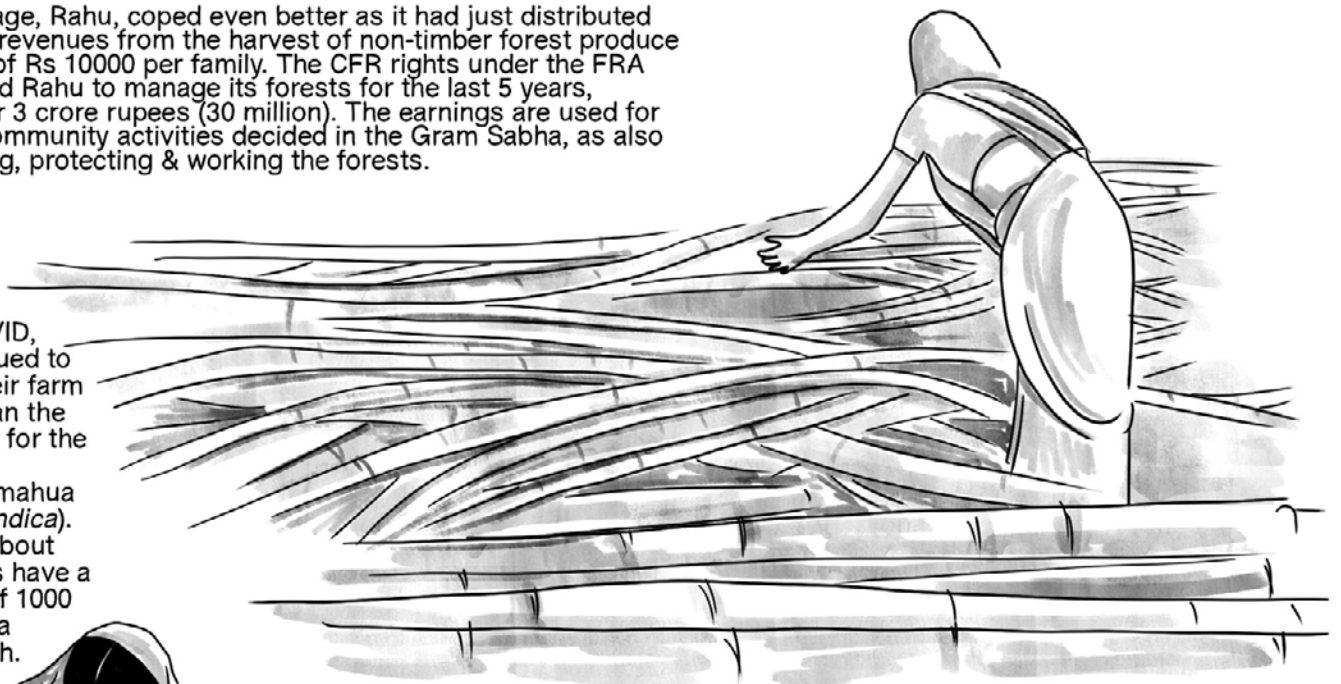
People desilt the local dams & use the silt on farms, which has increased their productivity almost 3 to 4 times. Better conservation has also enhanced habitat for wildlife.

During the COVID crisis, Payvihir immediately closed its boundaries, organised essential supplies with vendors on a weekly basis, & ensured that farmers got labour for their fields. They rescheduled their other works in a manner that they didn't need outside workers. The work in farm & forest has thus continued most of the time during the lockdown.

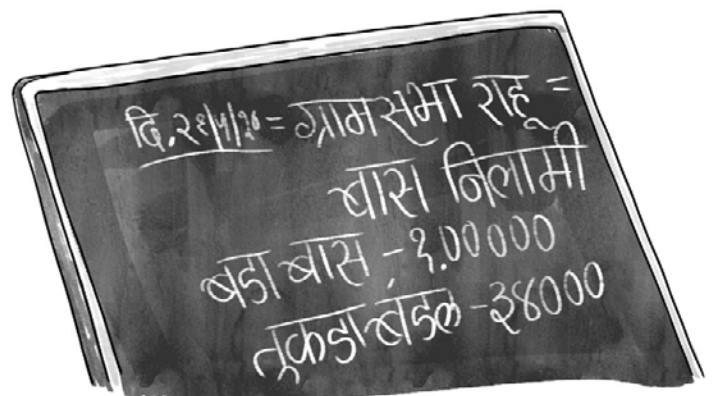
The women prepared masks through their SHGs & ensured that the PDS supply reached all the families on time.

Another village, Rahu, coped even better as it had just distributed its share of revenues from the harvest of non-timber forest produce to the tune of Rs 10000 per family. The CFR rights under the FRA have enabled Rahu to manage its forests for the last 5 years, earning over 3 crore rupees (30 million). The earnings are used for collective community activities decided in the Gram Sabha, as also for managing, protecting & working the forests.

During COVID, they continued to work on their farm land & began the preparation for the harvests of bamboo & mahua (*Madhuca indica*). This year, about 100 families have a collection of 1000 kg of mahua flowers each.



The gram sabha was contemplating procuring it from people, storing & marketing at a later stage, thereby preventing any distress sale; for this they also used the services of local banks. There is a concern about the market response, but they are confident that there will be a way out.





## ECONOMIC REVIVAL IN KUTHAMBAKKAM, TAMIL NADU

Till the early 1990s, Kuthambakkam didn't have roads or infrastructure, livelihoods were insecure, there was significant casteist discrimination, & cases of domestic violence against women & children were reported. The area was a regional hub of illicit arrack brewing & black marketeering.



Elango Rangasamy, having returned from a city-based job, won the panchayat election in 1996. He introduced grassroots level planning, & mobilized local people to respond to the problems of the village.



The larger vision was to provide decent housing for all, form more self-help groups, create employment through panchayat activities, create livelihoods based on local resources, & build an economy on the principle of abundance instead of scarcity.

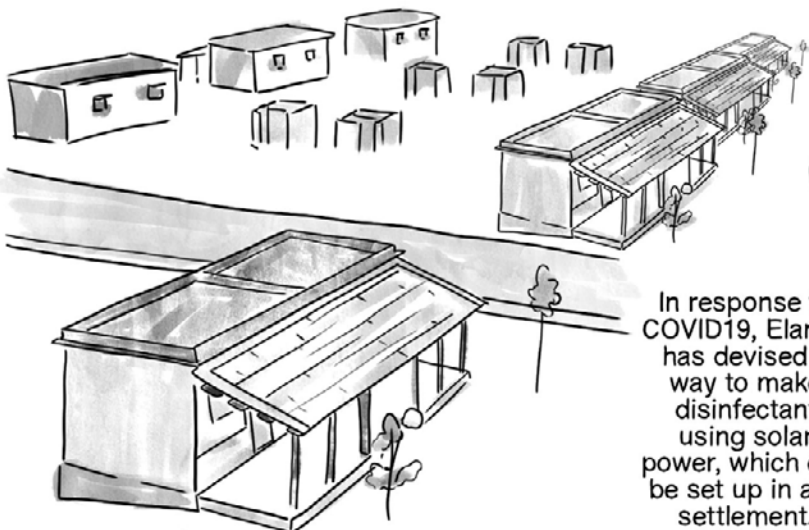


Nearly 150 families were able to get local employment in small-scale manufacturing units.

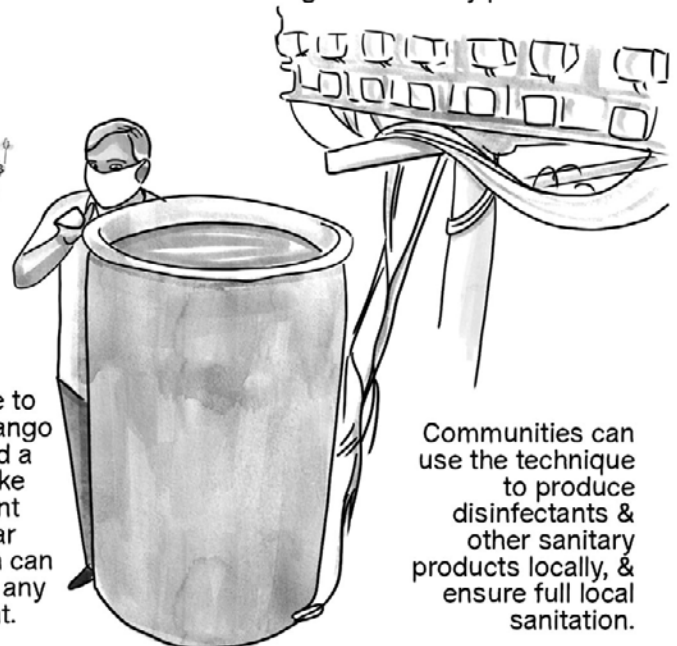
The Panchayat Academy was started in order to spread good practices & to educate & build capacity in panchayat leaders in Tamil Nadu.



Using a state government housing scheme, he managed to convince several dozen families to live in a mixed caste housing colony.



Being an engineer & inventor, Elango worked on energy saving solutions for both the public space & households, including a reasonably priced solar kit.



In response to COVID19, Elango has devised a way to make disinfectant using solar power, which can be set up in any settlement.

Communities can use the technique to produce disinfectants & other sanitary products locally, & ensure full local sanitation.

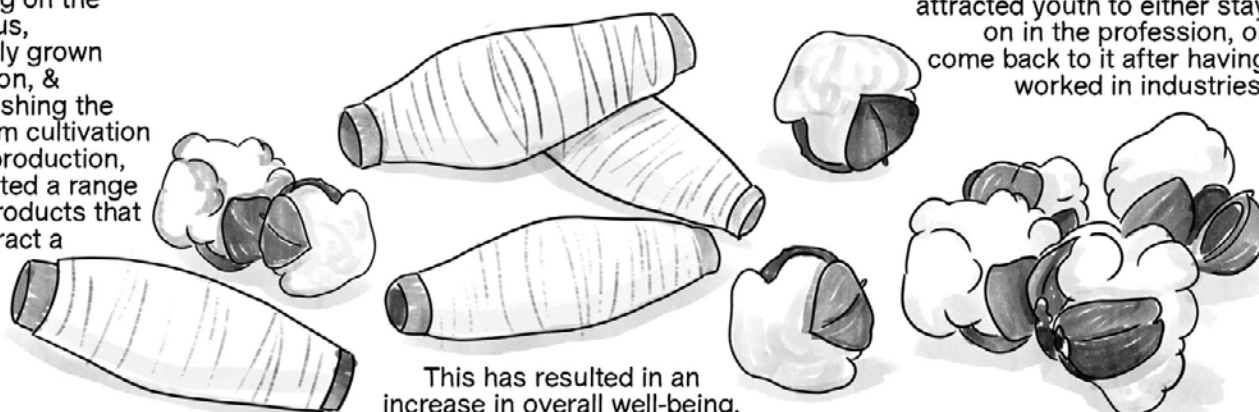
## REVIVAL OF HANDLOOM WEAVING IN KACHCHH, GUJARAT

As is the case with crafts in general in India, about two decades back handloom weaving in Kachchh was in severe decline. Hit by the entry of cheap mass-produced industrial substitutes, & by a series of natural disasters in the late 1990s & early 2000s, it was a mere shadow of its former self.



As part of a coordinated civil society effort to rebuild Kachchh after the devastation, a crafts facilitation organization Khamir along with some enterprising weavers made innovations to revive vanaat (weaving). It now has an established presence within & outside India.

Innovating on the indigenous, organically grown Kala cotton, & re-establishing the chain from cultivation to cloth production, they created a range of new products that could attract a market.



This has resulted in an increase in overall well-being, especially economic.

Most importantly, it has attracted youth to either stay on in the profession, or come back to it after having worked in industries.

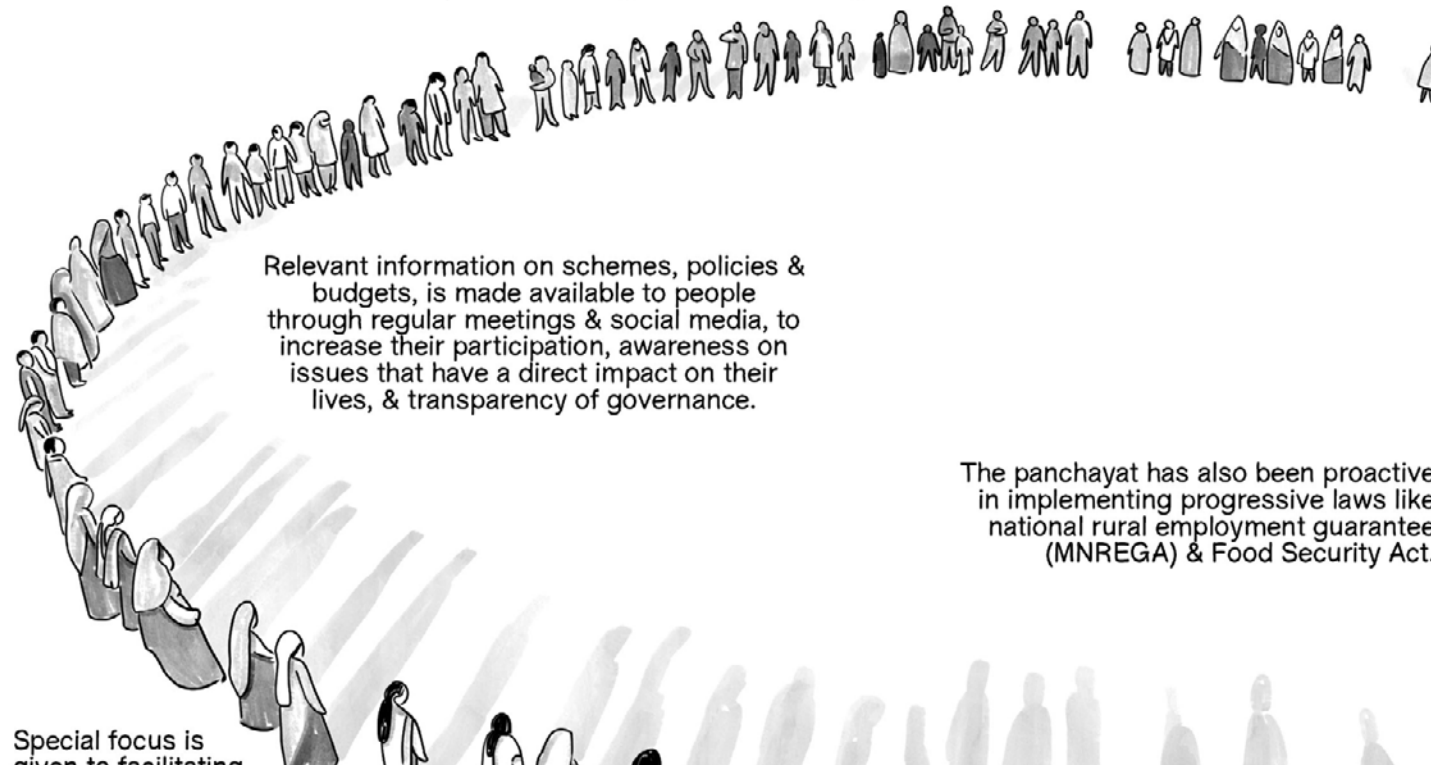
Equally important is the satisfaction of expressing their own creativity, working at home with their families, & being their own boss. Linked to this has also been a significant reduction in casteism (weavers have traditionally been considered 'untouchables'), greater role & voice for women & youth, even as elders still pass down skills & knowledge to new generations. There is a flowering of innovation & creativity, & hybrid knowledge & learning systems, without losing the essence of Kachchh's vanaat.



With the COVID crisis, its vulnerability to the ups & downs of global trade has become sharply evident. This is likely to affect the less well-to-do amongst the weavers, such as many 'job workers' who produce for the 'entrepreneur' weavers. On the whole, though, the vankar community seems to feel that it has survived previous crises, & will outlive this one also, with customary adaptation & innovation.

## PANCHAYAT-LED COVID RESPONSE IN KUNARIYA, KACHCHH, GUJARAT

The current sarpanch of the village, Suresh Chhanga, elected in 2017, has facilitated greater public participation, collective decision-making, effective implementation of relevant government's schemes, & bridging the gap between villagers & government departments. Over the last few years it has moved towards effective implementation of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment that promotes self-governance of villages.



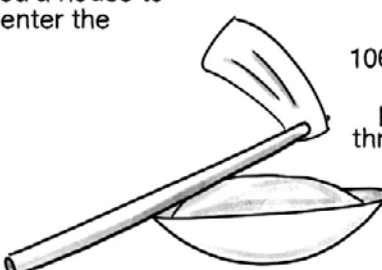
Relevant information on schemes, policies & budgets, is made available to people through regular meetings & social media, to increase their participation, awareness on issues that have a direct impact on their lives, & transparency of governance.

The panchayat has also been proactive in implementing progressive laws like national rural employment guarantee (MNREGA) & Food Security Act.


Special focus is given to facilitating the voices and opinions of women, enabling an increase in participation from zero to 50%.

Over 115 awareness programmes reaching 16,000 people have been organised on health, education, agriculture, animal husbandry, women's participation, cleanliness, employment & environment.

During the COVID crisis, the panchayat made full use of social media to raise awareness about COVID & relevant safety measures, & facilitated a house to house health survey. Only identified traders & producers could enter the village for selling essential commodities.



106 labourers were immediately provided work through MNREGA.



For the future, the panchayat plans to have a separately constructed ward in case of emergency if COVID cases appear.



One of the most innovative steps was to reach out to elders to teach children stuck at home their special skills of music, crafts, cooking, traditional technologies, as also enable e-learning.

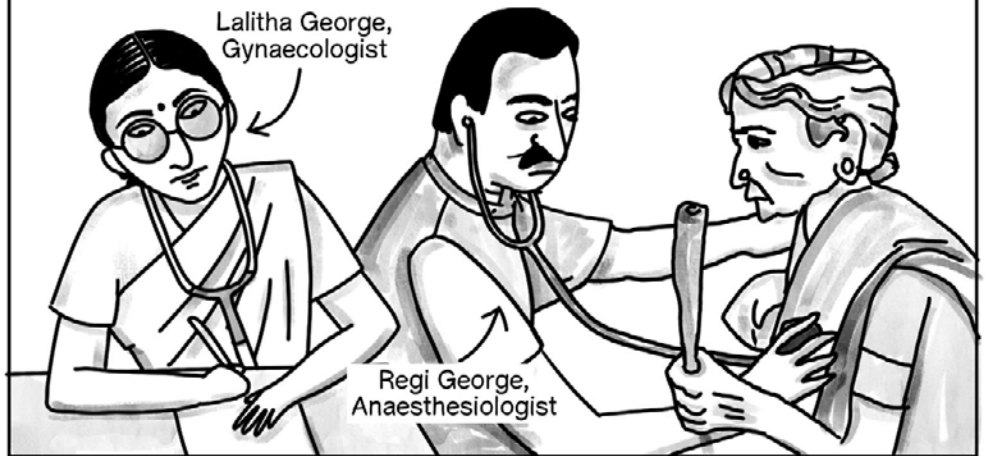
Around 316 families were provided food aid from the panchayat; better-off families & several farmers contributed to feed 87 of the poorest families. Visually impaired & differently-abled individuals, single-women & other marginalised families were provided with food aid, necessary medicines, & other urgent necessities.



## HEALTH EMPOWERED PANCHAYAT'S PROMPT RESPONSE TO COVID, SITILINGI, TAMIL NADU



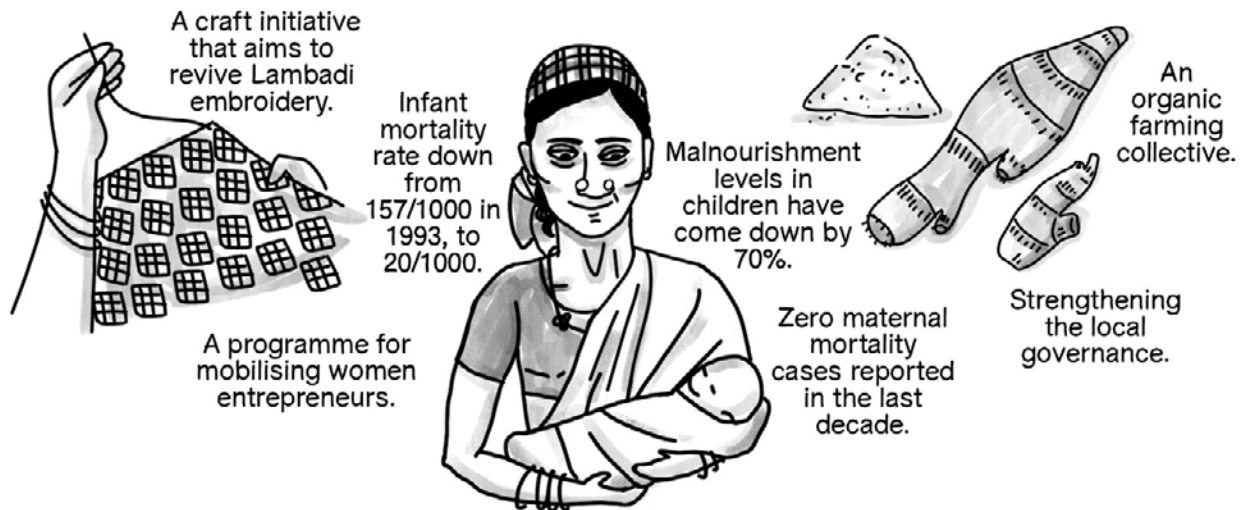
In 1993, inspired by Gandhian values, a young couple from Kerala set up Tribal Health Initiative for the local community, the Malevasi adivasis.



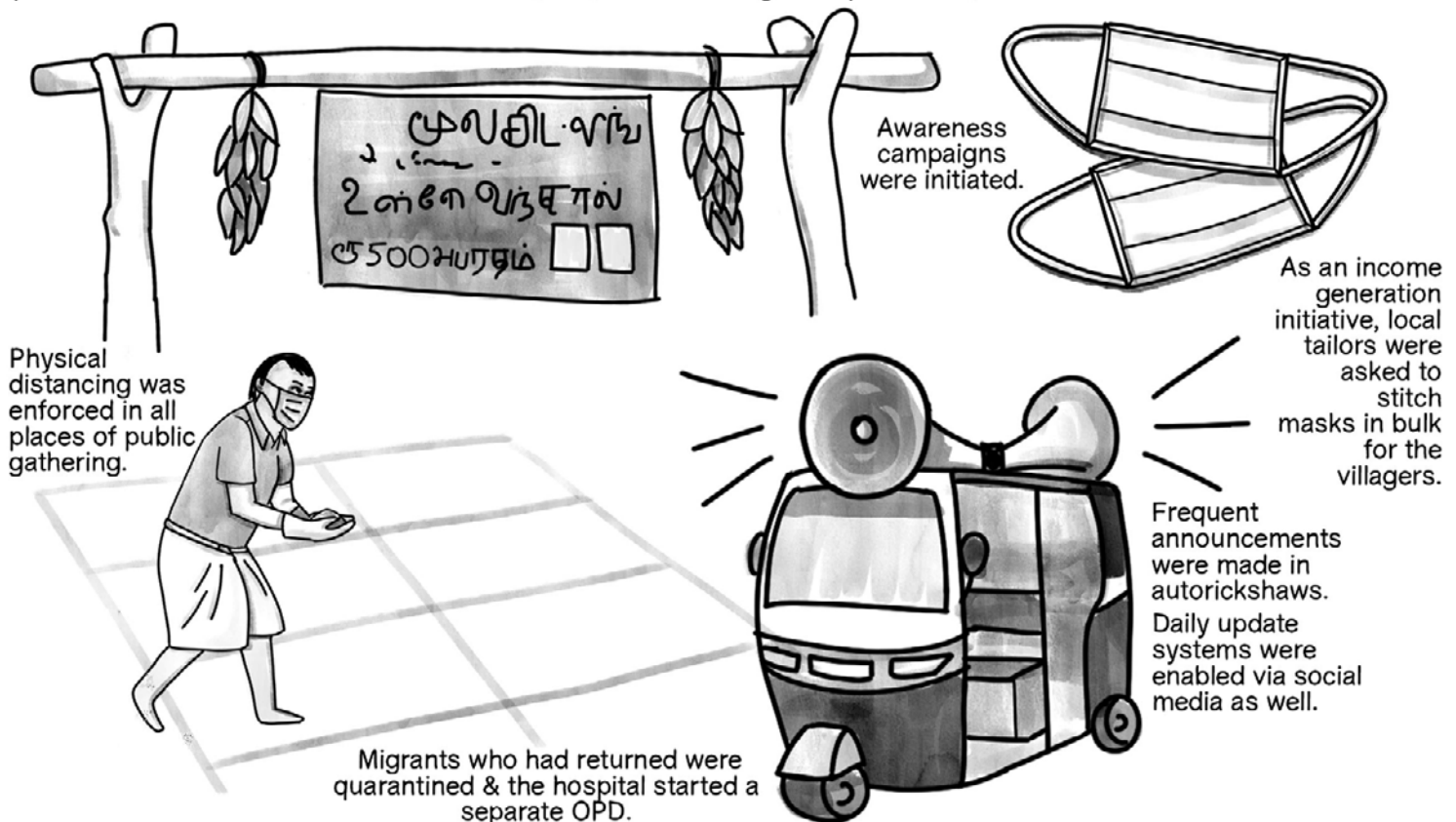
Lalitha George,  
Gynaecologist

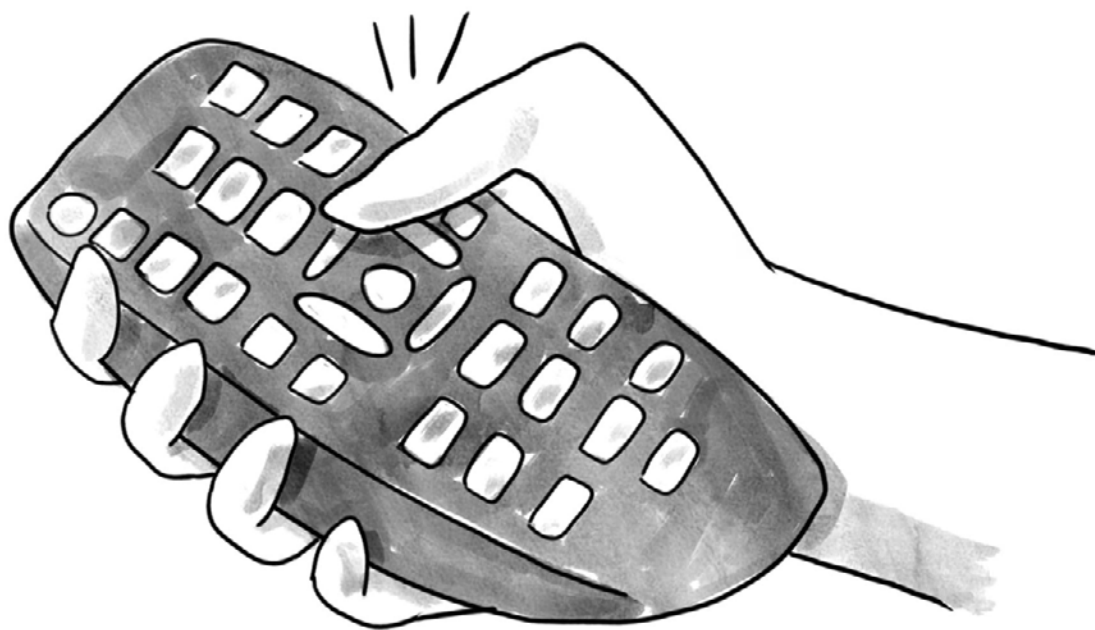
Regi George,  
Anaesthesiologist

With their consistent effort & with the cooperation of the locals, the initiative has made the following possible:



The Sittilingi Panchayat's response to COVID19 was prompt: as soon as it found out about the pandemic, panchayat president Ms. Madheswari met with the PHC, THI, and relevant govt departments, & went into disaster control mode.



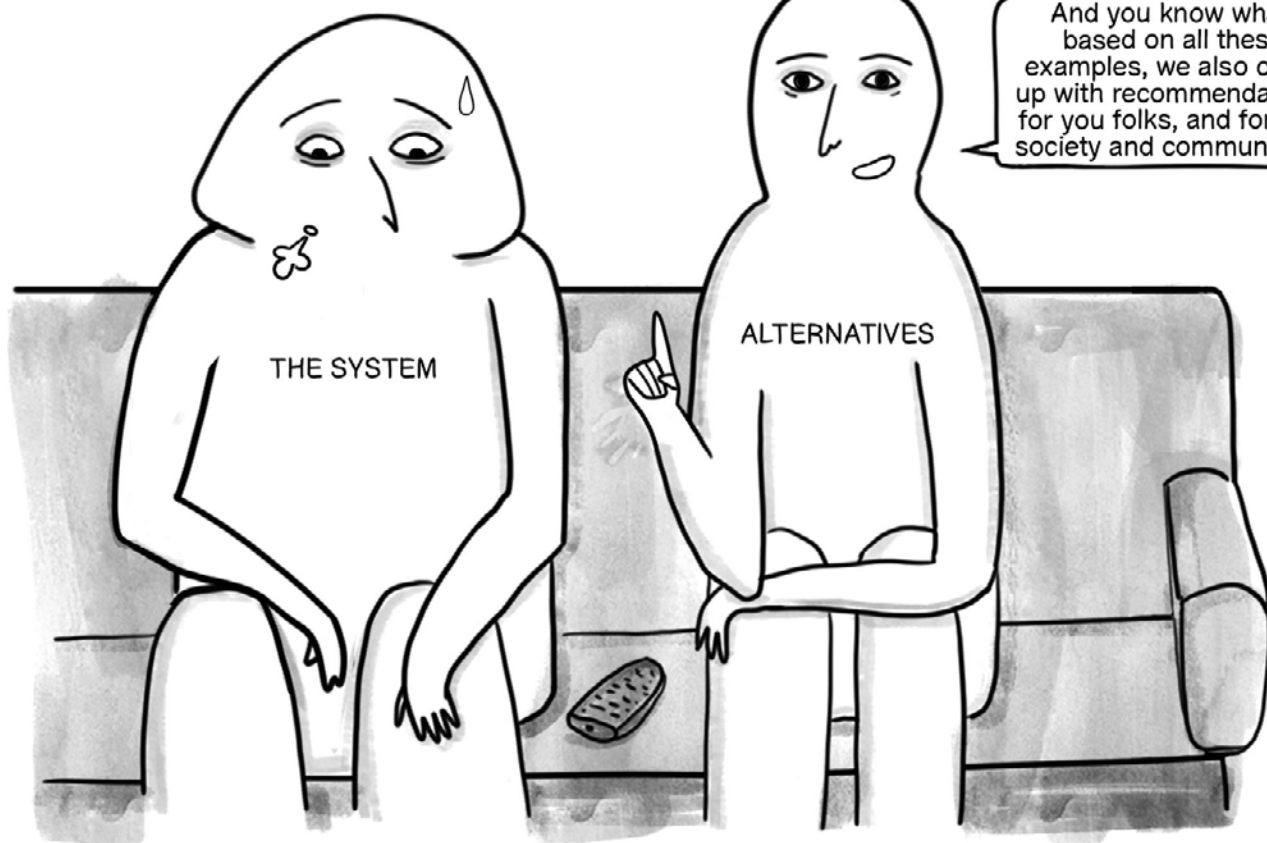


This is overwhelming,  
I've had enough for  
the day!

This is just the  
beginning. A drop  
in a bucket.

There's more to  
come in our second  
edition!

And you know what,  
based on all these  
examples, we also came  
up with recommendations  
for you folks, and for civil  
society and communities..



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOOD INSECURITY IN VILLAGES

- Prioritise small producers (who constitute most of the producers in India), including farmers, pastoralists, fishers, forest-dwellers, craftspeople.
- Facilitate the formation of collectives of such people, especially the more vulnerable sections, at village and village cluster level; ensure that they have adequate access to land and other productive assets.
- Support, promote, practice organic, biologically diverse, locally ecosensitive agriculture, with food as the highest priority. Promote the setting up of Community Grain Banks, build on traditional systems of storing and passing on local genetic material of crops and livestock.
- Ensure optimal use of water, giving high priority to dryland and rainfed farming; dis-incentivise use of bore wells and water intensive crops, and incentivize the rejuvenation of open wells and other traditional and new systems that optimize water use.
- To enable small producers to switch to such agriculture, transfer chemical fertilizer and any other Green Revolution related subsidy to organic inputs and other facilities to help in the transition period; but such support must help reach self-reliance and sovereignty, not become a perpetual dependence on government.
- Actively disincentivize big producers, especially corporate ones, through taxation and other means.
- Prioritise procurement of local produce in PDS, mid-day meals, anganwadi and other such programmes (empowering local communities to run them), in relevant public institutions such as hospitals, schools and colleges, and in private institutions; incentivize crops, livestock, fisheries that are suited to local agroecological conditions and small producer systems.
- Do not further compromise food sovereignty and security, by signing on to more trade deregulation/free trade agreements; get out of any existing such agreements.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LACK OF MARKET ACCESS FOR FARMERS & INADEQUATE OR UNHEALTHY FOOD AVAILABILITY IN CITIES

- Facilitate the setting up of local producer markets in decentralized manner, enabling easy access both to primary producers and to consumers. These can be between two rural areas (including through fair barter), or between villages and towns/cities.
- Incentivise organic, small-holder or artisanal based produce in these markets; if big producers are also allowed, ensure that they do not dominate.
- Do not allow corporate companies to enter such markets.
- Facilitate fair price-setting by making full information available to producers and consumers; facilitate mutual negotiations in a transparent setting amongst them.
- Enable access to low-income families to organic produce through cross-subsidies, ethical investments by consumers and others, making special arrangements in fair price shops/PDS, and absorbing some of the producers' costs like infrastructure at the market and/or transportation of produce.
- Remove GST and any other such taxes that make the playing field even more unequal for artisanal and handmade produce, including handicrafts.
- Proactively make arrangements for regular visits of urban consumers of all ages to the where primary producers work, to see, understand, and participate in production processes, and transition from being passive consumers to becoming sensitive partners.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RURAL LIVELIHOOD INSECURITY LEADING TO OUTMIGRATION

- Promote localized livelihoods and local markets, giving priority to farmers, forest-dwellers, fishers, pastoralists, craftspeople, and other such producers
- Promote sustainable nature and natural resource based livelihoods, and the conservation of ecosystems and environment they are dependent on.
- Promote self-reliance and self-governance, empowering gram sabhas, mohalla sabhas, and other such local settlement based units of decision making. Give maximum priority to the full participation of women and other vulnerable sections/people.
- Enable creation of a Village Fund with appropriate rules of transparency, community benefit, and rotation of control.
- Prioritize local administration, leaders and workers for effective implementation of programs and policies.
- Support implementation of laws like Forest Rights Act, Panchayati Raj Act and Panchayat (Extensions to Scheduled areas) Act, and NREGA; connect programmes with them that create long-term local resources and capacities for communities to achieve self-reliance and self-governance
- Phase out policies and programmes that incentivize or force long-distance market dependence for basic needs
- Review all development activities and policies that involve irreversible destruction of nature and natural resources
- Eliminate incentives and subsides to big industries, for all products and services that can be produced and exchanged/distributed through local communities and distributed/decentralized entities
- Eliminate incentives for machine production of products that can be produced through labour intensive methods
- Stop weakening or dilution or sidestepping of laws that safeguard basic rights of people, and conservation of nature and the environment
- Stop unfair taxation, levies, etc (e.g. GST) on handmade products and processes; ensure MSPs for all such farm/forest/fishery produce and handicrafts, while not forcing producers to only sell to government agencies.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL CAPACITY TO HANDLE HEALTH AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

- Ensure the establishment or strengthening of local health facilities (PHCs, etc), integrating diverse systems of medicine and healthcare, under the overall governance of institutions of local self-governance in association with relevant government departments and civil society organisations; use the principle of subsidiarity, i.e. what can be dealt with at this local level should be, and block/district/state level facilities should only be for specialized services beyond this.
- Enable institutions of local self-governance to make effective use of traditional and new social media for all kinds of information flow and transparency (schemes/programmes, rules/laws, emergency measures for crises)
- Such institutions to have an updated roster of all vulnerable families/individuals and their specific needs
- Ensure that there is a special focus to facilitate the views and opinions of women and children
- Enable the convergence of all relevant government staff, overcoming their departmental silos, NGOs and local self-governance institutions
- Facilitate the understanding and planning of, and actions on, health, food, nutrition, livelihoods (agriculture, craft, entrepreneurship) in a holistic manner.
- Experiment with learning and education through life and throughout life, consisting of arts, music, dance, basic health and hygiene for everyone.