

# COVID-19 Recommendations

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How to deal with Covid-19  
lockdown crisis?

APRIL 13, 2020

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## CHAKMA RIGHTS & DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION

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## Coronavirus: How to deal with this Covid-19 lockdown crisis?

It is ironical that while there is information overload on Corona virus, it is now the single most concern of all nations and global leaders. Neither is there a cure nor any concrete information about the menace itself. As a community-based organization, CRDO has been receiving various questions, seeking clarification and advice on how to survive Covid-19 crisis and what is the best approach to deal with the situation.

We are extremely lucky that there is no Covid-19 positive case from our community so far and we don't have to worry about hospitalization or patient care. All we need to think about is how do we prevent ourselves from getting infected; And that should be our strategy - to keep ourselves free from this scourge. Let's understand what it means for each one of us individually and as members of the global family collectively.

One, follow the lockdown guidelines stipulated by the Government of India strictly. Second, maintain social distancing of at least 3 feet when you must interact with others for medicines, essentials and groceries. Third, wash your hands properly and wear a mask when you have cough, cold or any flu-like symptoms. Fourth, please avoid any social/religious/political gatherings during Lockdown period.

So, the next question is what is the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown on various sections of our people and what can we do to minimize the collateral damage and maximize the staying capacity, resilience and tolerance to absorb the sudden shock created by this never-seen-before turmoil.

Based on inputs and discussions we had with more than 100 affected people so far, here is the initial impact assessment of Covid-19 lockdown for our people situated /stranded across various cities/states.

Category	Sub-category	Estimated Impact*	Remarks / Recommendations
<b>A. Farmers</b>	Own enough land	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the land for growing food crops</li> </ul>
	Landless tenant	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marginalized, need to return to work for sharecropping – dependent on landlord</li> </ul>
<b>B. Migrant Workers</b>	Organized Sector	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impact may vary by sectors /industry</li> </ul>
	Unorganized sector	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vulnerable, irregular work /salary credit – most of them will need relief assistance</li> </ul>
	Daily wagers	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vulnerable - Provide emergency relief and try to facilitate opportunities for work</li> </ul>
<b>C. Service Holders</b>	Government /PSUs	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reserve % salary for emergency relief</li> </ul>
	Private /MNCs	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reserve % salary for emergency relief</li> </ul>
	NGOs	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excess workload due to Covid-19 crisis</li> </ul>
<b>D. Students</b>	Board exam completed	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Home studies /preparation</li> </ul>
	Board exam pending	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage stress level about pending exams</li> </ul>
	Other students	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do home schooling or online studies</li> </ul>
<b>E. Traders</b>	Vendors / shopkeepers	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use innovation/technology to deliver and make effective use of open timing window</li> </ul>

*\*Estimated Impact is based on estimates on a 0 to 10-point scale (10 being highest) and actual may vary.*

Amongst those affected, the most vulnerable and marginalized are the daily wage earners, migrant workers in the unorganized sector and landless peasants who are dependent on landlords for sustenance. As per initial estimates, there are about 1800 to 2000 Chakma migrant workers who are stranded now in various cities due to the lockdown.

They need immediate help on essentials and steps must be taken to provide relief and assistance. About 80% of this population would like to return home (native states) as many have lost their jobs or anticipate no future.

As we grapple with this Covid-19 crisis, there is a lesson for all of us to learn. That we are all vulnerable to this dreaded disease irrespective of whether we are rich or poor, black or white, low or high caste. It does not matter where you live, what your gender, class, ethnicity or place of origin is. That we are all connected to each other and must think of the entire world as one family – ‘*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*’.

Let us remember that we are fighting an invisible enemy and there is no any vaccine to protect us today. Living in lockdown state has become the new normal as we navigate our daily life within the four walls. This virus is not going to leave us anytime soon and we must prepare ourselves to deal with this virus. We must think of what can be done to address short-term and medium to long-term challenges to mitigate the situation.

Time frame	Plan of action
<b>Immediate /Short term</b>	1. Identify the most needy and vulnerable section of people and provide essential supplies like rice, dal and relief materials asap for them to sustain till the lockdown is over. For example, there are migrant workers /daily wagers stranded in cities without food. This is the time now for those in govt/PSUs/MNCs to come forward and contribute with kindness and generosity. A certain % of salary is recommended to be kept as reserve to tide over this crisis.
	2. Create a repository of people affected by Covid-19 in major cities. Seek help from government /administration and seek immediate relief /assistance for those stranded.
	3. Have online personal calls /conferences with the stranded migrant workers to understand their condition and ameliorate their day to day hardships/ condition.
	4. Monitor the situation as it evolves and tweak the plan as needed.
<b>Medium to Long-term</b>	1. Create awareness amongst our people in the villages about the need to cultivate production of food crops like paddy, maize, wheat, potato, banana, tapioca, etc. All landowners /farmers should try to increase land utilization and productivity/ yield per acre.
	2. GBs/NGOs/Public leaders can set an example by planting food crops in their own farmland or by taking a few acres of land on lease and start cultivation of such crops.
	3. Try to match demand and supply to find gainful employment for the unemployed workers in food crop farming or allied activities through online /calls.
	4. Facilitate calls with the stranded /unemployed migrant workers regarding their plan to stay put where they are or return home and make an informed decision in line with government guidelines and individual condition.
	5. Share relevant and timely information with translation in Chakma language (if required) and keep them informed /engaged on Covid-19.
	6. Network with various NGOs and like-minded individuals working in the field.

Unlike a Tsunami or earthquake, we must fight this Corona virus like a disciplined marathon runner. Disciplined social distancing, home quarantine and maintaining personal hygiene are your best medicines. It is the only way to stay clear of this Corona virus. Let’s brace up to this reality and ward off this dangerous virus.

It will require an organizational set-up to deal with this deadly virus and any reckless act or panic can create chaos, confusion and do more harm than good to our society. We need a well-planned and concerted approach to ensure there is proper coordination, communication and implementation of government plans and directions.

Too much information or ‘Infomedic’ is another issue we must deal with in our fight against this virus. We must look for only authentic sources published by MoHFW, Govt of India <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/> and not fall prey to fake news and rumors floating around in social media. It is important to free our minds and keep ourselves both physically and mentally healthy.

At times like this, it is important that we are united by mutual trust, collaboration and solidarity. Let us be empathetic to those affected and go beyond individual pursuit of happiness to a more humane worldview guided by universal harmony and fraternity. Let us be kind and compassionate to each other. It is the need of the hour and the only way to tide over this crisis.

It is heartening to note that many organizations like UCS has already started fund collection drive for Covid-19 and have distributed 5 kg rice to 10 poor families in each village. CRDO also appreciates the work done by NaMG members and free distribution of rice to over 500 families by Mahabodhi Society.

***“This is an extraordinary situation where we are required to maintain social distance and yet be together in this collective fight against the Corona virus. We are all in the same boat as this virus knows no boundaries and can attack anyone. Stay home and stay safe!”***

Since the lockdown has now been extended till end of April, it is anticipated to cause further distress to our people, especially those migrant workers in the urban cities doing job in factories, restaurants or security services. Even if we assume 50% of the total 2000 as badly affected who need relief and assistance across various cities, one can calculate the amount needed even if we assume @100/- rupees per head per day only for fooding expenses.

Keeping in view the above, and in order to provide relief and assistance during emergency situations, it has been decided to create a CRDO Covid-19 Emergency Fund to cope up with the emerging situation. Donations can be made to our CRDO Joint Account. Please mention “Covid-19 Emergency Fund” when you make any payment for the said purpose.

<b>Name of Account holder (s):</b>	<b>1.Indrajit Chakma 2.Anton Chakma</b>
<b>Account No.:</b>	<b>0 7 2 1 0 5 0 0 1 6 1 0 8</b>
<b>IFSC Code:</b>	<b>U T B I O N S I 3 9 7</b>

We on behalf of CRDO urge those in position to come forward and make generous contributions. It is a rare juncture in history to go beyond ethnic, racial, religious identities or political and ideological differences to collaborate and be in solidarity with each other to deal with this humanitarian crisis. This is beyond borders or nationality.

We would also like you all to make use of this lockdown by staying safe at home and celebrate BIZU this year with your near and dear ones in a special way. Let us be patient, persistent and be positive. This too shall pass!

Sd/  
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Vice President

Sd/  
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General Secretary

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Finance Secretary

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