

25th March

To,

The Commissioner

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation

Hyderabad

Telangana State

Sub: Lockdown effect on Indigent and Hospitalised Population: Need for urgent breakfast, lunch & dinner provisions at all the 150 Annapurna Canteens & Expansion of these services –
Reg

Sir,

The entire world is going through an unprecedented crisis with the rapid spread of Covid-19 and the Govt. of India as well as the state government have announced severe lockdown measures to contain the transmission of the virus.

While, as citizens, we fully appreciate the gravity of the situation and are willing to cooperate, we would like to bring to your particular attention some immediate concerns that need to be addressed, because of these decisions. **This letter is specifically with regard to the requirements of adequate food and safe drinking water for huge numbers of daily wagers, socially vulnerable persons, homeless people and care-takers of patients in hospitals.**

In the last 2-3 days of lockdown, we have witnessed in Hyderabad alone that approximately 50,000 people have suffered due to lack of or very limited access to basic food & safe drinking water. The situation has aggravated due to complete halt of all transport and restriction on food outlets. In times of emergencies, food & water becomes the most significant supply that must be ensured to save people, particularly daily wagers and socially marginalized persons from hunger and consequent ill-health.

In the past 6 years, the Annapurna canteens have proven to be an important service that provide

hot meals to the poor at Rs. 5 per plate. During the Janata curfew the canteens were closed down and there are reports of people going without food. In extra-ordinary times like this, the GHMC and Govt. of Telangana would do well by regularizing and expanding this food-delivery service to reach out to many more needy people.

This includes all kinds of persons who have lost daily wage work due to this pandemic shutdown (ex. rag pickers, domestic workers etc) as well as other vulnerable sections like migrant workers, street vendors, elderly, transgender and disabled persons, homeless people and pavement dwellers, stranded travellers, students dependent on local mess, single and widowed women, children living on the streets etc.

Considering the situation of 21-day complete lockdown and the acute hardships this may cause for the poor people, we earnestly urge you to consider the following and issue appropriate orders immediately.

1. Re-open all the 150 Annapurna canteens and make an announcement that they are open for all the needy, especially adda workers.
2. Provide daily breakfast and dinner also along with the currently available lunch, along with safe drinking water to all those who need the same at Annapurna canteens. Dinner could be provided for by 6 PM, before the night curfew begins.
3. Extension of Annapurna canteen services to as many places as possible to significantly increase outreach, across districts in all major and minor municipalities.
4. Relocate the Annapurna canteens close to the dwelling places - slums and bastis - as there are severe restrictions on the movements of people.

We urge the GHMC and the Telangana government to urgently take up the above measures. Your urgent intervention can prevent the toiling masses from starving and putting them at higher risk of contracting the corona infection.

Yours Sincerely,

A.Suneetha, Researcher

Rama Melkote, Rtd. Professor

Khaleda Parveen, Activist

K.Sajaya, Journalist

Vasudha Nagaraj, Advocate

Sumitra, Ankuram Society for Children

Jeevan Kumar, Human Rights Forum

Brother Vergheese, Montford Social Institute

K.Lalita, Researcher

K.Anuradha, Aman Vedika Homes for Children

Meera Sanghamitra, National Alliance of Peoples' Movements

Shiba Minai, Activist

Anjaneyulu Madduluri, Action Aid

Satyavati Kondaveeti, Bhumika Helpline

Vijaya Rukmini Rao, Activist