Role of Corporate and NGOs in Tackling the COVID-19 Pandemic Situation in India

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Abstract: The Corporate houses and different Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been constantly engaging in combating the COVID-19 pandemic situation in India. As a part of the CSR (Corporate Social Responsibilities) activity, several Indian corporate houses like the Mc Donald's, the Audi, the Coca-Cola, the Volkswagen and many more Indian origin companies like the Infosys Foundation, the ITC Ltd, the TCS, the Reliance Industries Ltd etc. are trying to contribute money, foods, necessary commodities to the part of society where it requires the most and trying to make people aware about basic hygiene. Other than that the companies have taken precautionary measures for most of their employees to Work from Home and other flexibilities. Along with the corporate houses, the NGOs have been untiringly trying to help migrant labourers and other affected poor people in their own way apart from governmental measures. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) of India has already issued instruction to all states to utilize the services of NGOs to provide food and shelter to the migrant workers. NGOs like the MCKS Food for the Hungry Foundation, the Zomato Feeding India, the Give India, the SEEDS, the Uday Foundation, and the Khushiyaan Foundation etc. have been proving free foods or ration and shelters for migrant labourers and distributing free soaps, sanitizers & masks, medicines etc. to those who are not capable to buy. NGOs are also helping to those elderly persons who are abandoned by their families and friends. They are also collecting donations from the middle class and rich people who want to become a part of this philanthropic activity. All of them are trying to make India unite, hunger less and working with government to help those who needs it the most. The aim of this article is to focus on the role of the corporate houses and the NGOs in combating the pandemic situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in India.

Index Terms - COVID-19, Corporate, NGOs, economic insecurity, livelihood

I. INTRODUCTION

The Corona virus or the COVID-19 outbreak has become most crucial fatal disease in our contemporary world. This highly infectious disease has been gradually and rapidly engulfing the whole world and resulted in deaths of a huge number of people. It has come out in the Wuhan province of China from December, 2019[1] and has been spreading worldwide rapidly. The whole world now is eagerly engaging in confronting this disease in the present day of the 21st century. It appears as a challenge before the whole world and both governmental and non-governmental institutions and organizations and corporate have been engaging in controlling this contagious disease. And, the different research centres of the whole world now engaged from day to night to discover the proper medicine and vaccine. However, now the scientists and medical experts have been untiringly searching the origin, nature, types, and extent of its effects on human life. There are many corporate and many more Indian origin companies are trying to contribute something in terms of money, foods, and necessary commodities to the part of society where it requires the most. And, obviously make people educated about basic hygiene, do's and don'ts etc. No doubt, CSR activities are intended for the general public, but initially, it starts from the employees of the companies. Right now, most of the companies have taken precautionary measures for most of their employees to Work from Home and other flexibilities. Using masks and Washing hands with sanitizers frequently for those working under emergency duty. On the contrary, when hundreds of migrant workers are

coming back to their native homes by walking, they even don't have minimum money to feed themselves, our Indian NGO's are helping them in their own way apart from government measures. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has already issued instruction to all states in India to utilize the services of NGOs and religious organizations to provide food and shelter to the migrant workers who has lost their jobs and stranded in distant places. NGOs are proving free foods / ration and shelters for migrant labourers and distributing free soaps, sanitizers & masks etc. to those who are not capable to buy and arranging free treatments & medicines to poor families wherever possible.

II.   RESEARCH METHODOS:

2.1.Hypotheses:

As the present article is a literature survey-based research article; therefore, it is based on secondary research materials and secondary sources of dada. Now, for fulfilling objectives of the present study some hypotheses are formulated and validity of these hypotheses would be verified on the basis of available secondary research materials. The hypotheses are as follows:

a) NGO's have been trying to confront the COVID-19 pandemic situation.
b) Not only NGOs but also different corporate companies have been trying to combat this situation jointly.
c) Indian companies could be world's door to a COVID-19 vaccine.

2.2.Sources of Data Collection:

For verifying the validity of these hypotheses, necessary data has collected books, articles of e-journals; e-materials, etc.

III.   DICUSSION:

3.1.Corporate Engagement

Following CSR (Corporate Social Responsibilities) activity, the MC Donald's company has sent the message to the mass people by bifurcating the logo 'm' divided into two parts 'n'. The two parts of 'm' represent the meaning of social distance. Similarly, the logo of Audi is represented by four separate rings and urges to keep distance. Volkswagen has presented their new logo by creating a gap between V and W which represents social distancing. Other companies are dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic situation in a different way. Companies like the Infosys Foundation, the ITC Ltd, the Hindustan Unilever Ltd, the TCS, and the Reliance Industries Ltd are dealing with the COVID-19 situation in a different way. The Infosys Foundation has paid Rs. 50 crore to the PM CARES Fund. It also contributes additional Rs. 500 crore to be utilized for providing testing kits, masks, ventilators, food and nutrition to the poor persons. This company has been also working with the Narayana Hospitals to provide 100 beds quarantine facility. Then the ITC Ltd has arranged 150 crore COVID-19 contingency fund to provide financial assistance for the poor Indian citizens, and Hindustan Unilever Ltd also has provide 100 crore. It also provides sanitizers, the Domex bathroom, floor cleaners, soaps, hand washes, health kits to the hospitals and underprivileged persons. The Tata Consultancy Services denotes health kits, ventilators for the poor persons. The Reliance Industries Ltd provides 100 beds to the COVID-19 hospital, 50 lakh free meals, masks, free fuel for emergency vehicles, and 1000 PPE for health care workers. No doubt, the CSR (Corporate Social Responsibilities) activities are meant for the general citizen. But it starts firstly from the employees of the companies. At present, most of the companies have taken precautionary measures for most of their employees to Work from Home and other flexibilities and proving also masks and sanitizers for those working under emergency duty.[2]

3.2.NGO's Engagement:

When hundreds of migrant workers were coming back to their native homes by walking, they even didn't have minimum money to feed themselves, our Indian NGO's have been helping them in their own way apart from government measures. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued instruction to all states in India to utilize the services of NGOs and religious organizations to provide food and shelter to the migrant workers who lost their jobs and stranded in distant places. A crowd founding NGO, the 'Milap' helped those workers in this COVID-19 pandemic situation. Not only migrant workers, but also daily income laborers, domestic help, taxi drivers, restaurant waiters etc. Delhi headquartered NGO; the 'Goonj' has initiated the 'Rahat COVID-19' program to help all these affected persons by providing rations and all essential commodities. Another NGO was doing campaign 'India Fights Corona'. It raised funds to cater soaps, sanitizers, masks and other safety related materials to all poor persons / abandoned elder persons who do not have money to buy it. The MCKS food for the hungry, the Akshaya Patra Foundations, the Safa India and the Uday Foundations are some of the NGOs who are working for combating Corona crisis.[3]

As per the Supreme Court, the contribution and role played by NGOs are entitled to get appreciation. They have been trying a lot to help migrant worker and helpless persons by providing all necessary things like food, water and transport during the COVID-19 pandemic situation in India. The Supreme Court also appreciated the individuals who played an important role in helping to the migrants and other needy persons in the society with proper passion and devotion.[4]

3.3. The appreciated role of NGOs Worldwide:

During last couple of years, NGOs have made an important contribution to humanity worldwide. For example, just in relation to the UN, they have organized themselves and advocated for the UN General Assembly to pass new resolutions and treaties. They have helped to create new units within the UN institutions (like the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights). They have come forward for the establishment of the International Criminal Court, and brought issues to the attention of the UNO, which governments had failed to do. In addition to that, they are the ones that steadily deliver humanitarian assistance, and they promote the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals. As per secretary-general of the United Nations, common citizens and small organizations have an important role to play in fighting the COVID-19 at base level. Some individuals and community belong to some areas can be considered as a reference for the pandemic situation. NGOs are the one who can evaluate themselves and execute new initiatives like creating emergency funds, merge into partnering with one another to collect donations, rendering technical support and other facilities to nursing homes and other places where it is required the most.

3.4. The appreciated role of NGOs in India:

Based on the current scenarios, Indian NGOs are wishing to incorporate the below points.

(a) Most of the cases, in Indian culture, senior citizens (>= 60 years of age) are staying with other family members. Although they are more vulnerable age-group compared to the other age-group in the pandemic situation. They need extra care, medicines and not to go outside home for any reason. NGOs are always trying to spread awareness about the vulnerability of the Covid-19 to senior citizens. They are engaged in multiple activities to make our society more aware to fight against corona. They even urged senior citizens to confine them in their house. In any special case where there is nobody to bring foods and medicines from the market for them, NGOs are ready to supply those essential services at their doorstep.

(b) NGOs are making people aware regarding the strategy for each person to be followed. They have to stay at home as much as possible hand keep social distancing while going outside for any urgent work like procuring medicines or buying food etc. After returning home they have to clean their hands by soap and water. If anybody is facing flu-like symptom then they should not go out and seek medical help at home.

If the symptom becomes a severe one, then they need to call proper healthcare service to get admission in hospitals / nursing homes if necessary.

(c) Apart from the effort from government side, various NGOs are trying to map the entire healthcare infrastructure in one network. Each person should be mapped to a primary healthcare provider which can be a nearest hospital as well. The details of all retired doctors, trained nurses and other health staffs are getting listed in nearest hospitals/ health care centres so that they can take help from these persons during emergency.

3.5 Growing constraints for NGOs:

The work of NGOs is a tough one especially in this pandemic situation, however, civic space has been shrinking for civil society since 9/11, including in advanced countries. Increased restrictions have become a great obstacle to the activities of civil society in all areas and their spaces for action have shrunk significantly. Human rights organizations and democratic groups were first affected, and in the last couple of years the problem has been increased significantly. The Corona virus crisis is getting worsens day by day in spite of different preventive measures taken by the NGOs, government and other social entities. It is a great threat to global health; many countries have introduced various measures to stop the spread of the virus. Some of the measures includes like public gatherings were banned; people are ordered not to go out of home; free movement between and within national borders was restricted; surveillance measures were taken to monitor people's movements; access to health care was restricted to emergencies.[5] All these denote that active NGOs are going to be at the forefront of the battle against COVID-19 and they not spectators only, they are preparing themselves accordingly.

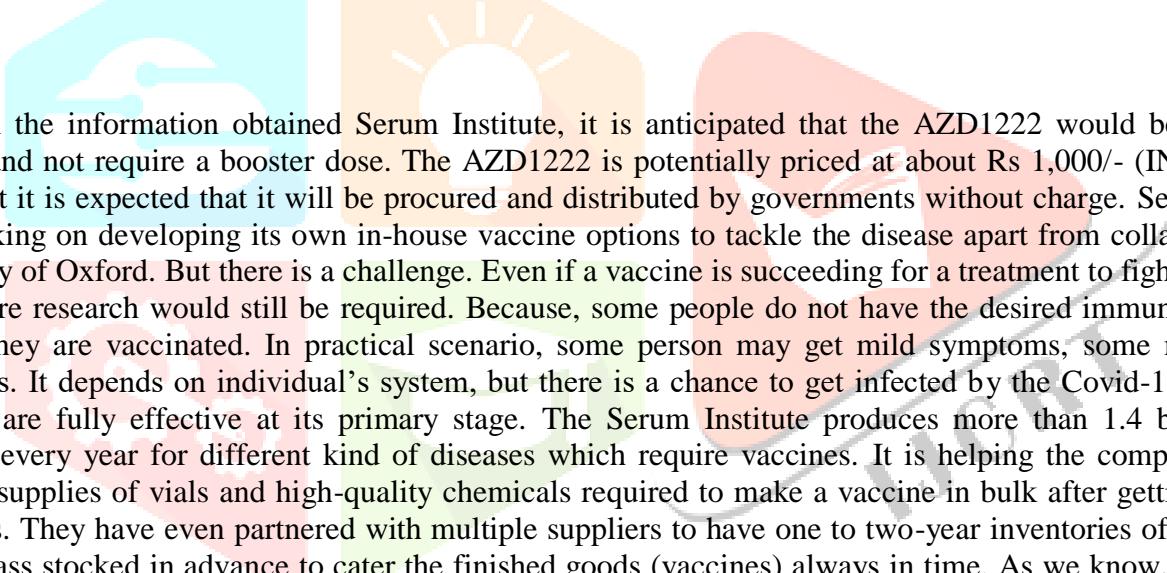## 3.6. The appreciated role of Corporate Organizations in India:

Several organization and companies like the Ambuja Cement Foundation, the Gram Vaani, and the Kaleidofin are helping underprivileged and poor persons. The Ambuja Cement Foundation was established in 1993. It is a kind of grassroots level organization which is helping our country. In the current pandemic times, its health team is working for all of their stakeholders. They have taken the responsibility to educate all returned migrant people to wash their hands after returning home and keep social distancing while outside. Even for the person who got COVID-19 symptoms, make them isolated at home with self-quarantine. They are also working for some preventive measures so that the spreading of corona should not occur mainly from marketplace, shops and other community areas. They have also demarcated with white boxes so that there should not be any crowding. Some tribal community is asked to make PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) kit used in healthcare sectors and they are paid for it. Apart from PPE kit, they are producing masks and other protective equipment. Their health volunteers are pasting banners and posters to inform common people on key topics such as personal hygiene, social distancing and how to keep the elderly safe etc. Common people are also advised to contact emergency numbers whenever required. They are spreading awareness through the WhatsApp and mobile messages. Sometimes they are engaged in distributing ration and other essential commodities like mask, sanitizers to financially weaker section of the society.

The IIT Delhi created a social technology in 2009 named as Gram Vaani. It is using the IVR (Interactive Voice Response) technology and community radio. It is located in different states in PAN-India catering service to more than 2.5 million users. During this Covid-19 situation, it has introduced missed call based the IVR system in 4 states. It includes pre-recorded FAQs and other content for its users. It has a clear guidance to the society about the best practices to maintain the quarantine at the time of seeking any kind of assistance. They are also urging to report any issues related to food, monetary or medical exigency so that the person who is in a bad shape can get proper support from them. They are intimating elder persons for extended quarantine, small scale production of masks with the help of local tailors etc. They are also advising people to keep social distance in markets, how to take care elderly in pandemic situation, staying separate where sick person is there in a family, how to maintain proper hygiene and what to do in case of emergencies.

Kaleidofin (https://kaleidofin.com/) is a kind of financial service organization. It is working with low-income group households so that their future planning like children's education, better house, to start a small business etc comes true. It is making the low income group understand the value of small savings. It has also communicated them in case of any hard financial crisis, how to overcome it and how to earn money (may be the amount is small) during this COVID pandemic times. Its customers are notified through various campaigning including posters, printed materials and IVR (Interactive Voice Response) system.[6]

3.7. ROLES OF INDIANS COMPANIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF COVID-19 VACCINE:

The Serum Institute of India is the world's no 1producer of vaccines by volume. It is working for the Corona virus vaccine, including the AstraZeneca a Research- Based Bio Pharmaceutical Company or the Oxford University which has become global news. If the world is capable to invent a vaccine for Covid-19, there's a huge probability that it will be served in India through Serum Institute. It will produce the Vaccine for India and may export to other countries. The United States has secured almost 30million doses from the first phase which is planned for the potential vaccine against the COVID-19, initially it was known as the ChAdOx1 and now it is known as the AZD1222, by gradually up to $1.2 billion. The Serum Institute aims to initially produce more than 4 million doses a month, beginning from August 2020, and then gradually increased to approximately350 million doses a year. After the completion of successful trials, they are trying to maintain a stock of a few million doses to deliver the vaccine to our country and other high-risk areas across the globe in coming months.

Based on the information obtained Serum Institute, it is anticipated that the AZD1222 would be a single-dose vaccine and not require a booster dose. The AZD1222 is potentially priced at about Rs 1,000/- (INR) per dose in India. But it is expected that it will be procured and distributed by governments without charge. Serum Institute is also working on developing its own in-house vaccine options to tackle the disease apart from collaboration of the University of Oxford. But there is a challenge. Even if a vaccine is succeeding for a treatment to fight the Covid-19, some more research would still be required. Because, some people do not have the desired immune response and even if they are vaccinated. In practical scenario, some person may get mild symptoms, some may get severe symptoms. It depends on individual's system, but there is a chance to get infected by the Covid-19.Hence not all vaccines are fully effective at its primary stage. The Serum Institute produces more than 1.4 billion doses of vaccines every year for different kind of diseases which require vaccines. It is helping the company an edge in securing supplies of vials and high-quality chemicals required to make a vaccine in bulk after getting all required approvals. They have even partnered with multiple suppliers to have one to two-year inventories of glass vials and tubing glass stocked in advance to cater the finished goods (vaccines) always in time. As we know, any successful vaccine is always bound to be in short supply at first.

The Indian government is ready to cover the costs of trials of any vaccine in the country, said Poonawalla, the chairman of Poonawalla Group, also known as the 'vaccine king of India' adding that the government has a plan in placing advance orders for a potential vaccine. As per him, they have reached out and they have been very positive, but they don't want to take government money until they are very confident to deliver. The Serum Institute is one of the few companies who are ramping up hiring during the pandemic situation. It is also designing a separate facility to make vaccines for pandemic-level diseases that could handle more than 80% of the current vaccine candidates being developed, beyond just the Covid-19 ones. According to Poonawalla, the facility will be ready in the next two to three years and would be able to potentially deliver more than 700 million doses in a year.[7]

IV.   CONCLUSION:

So, from the above discussion, it is quite clear that the NGOs and the Corporate has been playing a significant role in the COVID-19 pandemic. And, the validity of the above- mentioned hypotheses are testified as true. As it is observed through the relevant literature that during the corona virus outbreak, the NGOs and the different companies or corporate organizations have been constantly contribute as their best. They are trying to contribute money, foods, medicines, sanitizers, soaps and many other necessary commodities. Different corporate houses like the Infosys Foundation, the ITC Ltd, the Hindustan Unilever Ltd, and the Reliance Industries Ltd etc. had provided some money as fund. Mention that the above-mentioned hypotheses are proofed as valid on the basis of the secondary materials. However, some medicines are given to the COVID-19 patients and some vaccines are in the trial stage. All surrounding circumstances suggest that this battle against the COVID-19 will be a long and sustain till any suitable vaccine comes into picture which will defeat the disease. As the doctors from different countries have argued so forcefully, require the principal response to be at the level of the community and the family. NGOs are the closest to the community and will need to get themselves well-prepared right now for the near future planning and activity.

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