

Relief to the Indian Economy Struggling with the Corona Pandemic

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Abstract: *Corona virus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered corona virus. To reduce the problems of the poor during the lockdown, the Central Government released a "Prime Minister's Poor Welfare Package" of Rs 1.70 lakh crore. Special attention has been taken in this package to farmers, poor, women, employees and workers. On the announcement of the relief package, former Congress President Rahul Gandhi said "this is the first step in the right direction". On 28 March, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the PM CARES Fund to fight Corona pandemic and appealed people to donate in this fund. In this research paper relief to the Indian economy struggling with the corona pandemic. The economic relief provided by the government, the PM CARES Fund and the situation of Lockdown in India will be discussed.*

Keywords: corona virus, pandemic, relief, fund, economy

1. Introduction

A corona virus is a virus that is found in animals and rarely, can be transmitted from animals to humans and then spread person to person. Corona virus is one of the deadliest transmissible viruses in recent history. Every day lost in effective response means the looming danger of a surge in infections. India spends a paltry 1.28% of its GDP on health care, and that may begin to bite if there's a full-blown outbreak. Partial lockdowns in many cities - shutting schools, colleges, businesses and suspending some rail transport - proves that the government fears that community transmission of the virus might have begun.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharama announced the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Scheme, under which the government would provide a relief package of Rs 1.7 trillion to the underprivileged, poor and migrant workers affected by a lockdown amid the Covid-19 crisis.

The FM also stated that workers like nurses, paramedics and sanitation staff, who were on the frontline of the war against the virus, would be provided a medical insurance cover of Rs 50 lakh per person.

If the corona virus pandemic has done one thing positive for India, it has brought everyone together. From big corporates to celebrities to common citizens, everyone seems determined to fight this together. On March 28, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM-CARES) Fund. While the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) received Rs 2,119 crore in two years, PM-CARES managed to get Rs 6,500 crore in donation within a week. Here are the biggest contributors to the PM-Cares Fund.

The Covid-19 pandemic is a serious threat to many lives and livelihoods in India. Sensing the gravity of the situation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a three-week lockdown for the entire country till April 14. A good commendable step by the government to protect people from getting infected with Corona.

Data and Methodology

India has been selected for the study of corona virus. The basis of this research paper is the relief package, PM-CARES fund and lockdown. This study is based on secondary data which is collected from different websites, books, journals, research articles and newspaper etc.

2. Result

- 1) Due to Corona virus from the government's relief package, there will be no starvation in the lock down.
- 2) The money from the PM-CARES Fund will be used only to fight the corona, which is a huge economic relief.
- 3) Commendable steps like early lockdown were taken by the government, which would prevent infection from spreading more in India than other countries.

3. Discussion

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharama announced the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Scheme, under which the government would provide a relief package of Rs 1.7 trillion to the underprivileged, poor and migrant workers affected by a lockdown amid the Covid-19 crisis.

Prime Minister Gareeb Kalyan scheme to have two parts – cash transfer and food security:

A. Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Anna Yojana: 800 million poor people in the country to get 5 kg of rice/wheat per month free of cost, in addition to the 5 kg they already get. Additionally, each household to get 1 kg of preferred dal for free for the next three months.

B. Cash transfer scheme:

- 1) **Farmers:** First installment of the PM-KISAN payment of Rs 2,000 to be frontloaded; move to benefit 87 million.
- 2) **MGNREGS:** Wage increased from Rs 182 to Rs 202 per day. Wage increase to benefit 50 million families, as there will be about 2000 increase in their income.

- 3) **Poor widows, aged, and divyang:** Ex-gratia of Rs 1,000 for the next three months, in two installments. 30 million people to benefit. Transfers to be done through direct benefits transfer (DBT).
- 4) **Women with Jan Dhan Yojana accounts:** 200 million to benefit from Rs 500 ex-gratia for the next 3 months.
- 5) **Beneficiaries of the Ujjwala scheme:** 80 million households benefitted from the gas cylinders provided under the scheme. These beneficiaries will get free cylinders for three months in view of the disruption the coronavirus lockdown will cause.
- 6) **Women in self-help groups:** 6.3 million SHGs get up to Rs 10 lakh collateral-free loans under the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya National Rural Mission scheme. The cap has been doubled to Rs 20 lakh. The move will benefit 70 million households.
- 7) **Organized sector workers:** Two parts to this. First, the Government of India will pay the EPF contribution of both employee and employer for the next three months. This will be for all those establishments which have up to 100 employees, 90 per cent of whom earn less than Rs 15,000 a month.
- 8) And second, in what will benefit 8 million employees and 400,000 establishments, the EPFO regulation will be amended to allow the withdrawal of up to 75 per cent of their corpus as non-refundable advance, or three months' salary, whichever is less.
- 9) **Construction workers:** States to be directed to utilize the Rs 31,000 crore welfare fund for building and construction workers for the benefit of 35 million workers in the midst of the corona virus crisis.
- 10) **District mineral fund:** State govts to be urged to utilize this fund for medical screening, medical testing and providing health care services in the wake of the corona virus crisis.

PM-CARES Fund

A COVID-19 relief fund was set up by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to prepare the country for the novel corona virus that has affected more than 13,495 people (17 April until 11:00 am.). The idea of setting-up a relief fund for the corona virus outbreak has been supported by several notable personalities, including sportsmen, Bollywood stars, businessmen and many of them have contributed to it to help India in its battle against the novel corona virus. Here's a list of celebs, sports stars, politicians and organizations who have pledged their support to the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations (PM-CARES) Fund:

Table 1: Names of those who donated to PM-CARES Fund

Name	Rupees in crore
T-Series	11
Akshay Kumar	25
Kotak Mahindra Bank	25
Uday Kotak	25
BCCI	51
JSW	100
D-Mart	100
Aditya Birla Group	500
Reliance Industries	500
Tata Group	1500

Source: moneycontrol.com

- 1) T-Series MD Bhushan Kuman donated Rs 11 crore to the PM-CARES Fund as he said it was "extremely important to do all we can to help". In addition, he donated to the Maharashtra CM Relief Fund as well.
- 2) Jaan hai toh jahaan hai" (The world is alive if you are), said Akshay Kumar as he committed himself to "save lives". The Bollywood actor donated Rs 25 crore to the PM-CARES fund. "This is that time when all that matters is the lives of our people. And we need to do anything and everything it takes," he tweeted.
- 3) Kotak Mahindra Bank MD Uday Kotak announced to donate Rs 25 crore to the PM-CARES Fund. The bank will also donate an additional Rs 25 crore to the fund. It is time to protect Lives and Livelihood," he tweeted.
- 4) The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) pledged to donate Rs 51 crore to PM-CARES "with the primary objective of dealing with emergency or distress situations". It is "committed to providing support to the state machinery in the face of adversity," it said.
- 5) JSW Group Chairman Sajjan Jindal has said that the group was continuously evaluating the situation. He said it was committed to assist the government in all ways possible to deal with the corona virus pandemic. The company donated Rs 100 crore to the PM-CARES Fund.
- 6) On April 3, the company declared on LinkedIn that the Adani Foundation had contributed Rs. 100 Cr to the PM-CARES. Adani Foundation has contributed Rs. 5 crore to the Gujarat CM-Relief Fund and Rs 1 crore to the Maharashtra CM- Relief Fund as well.
- 7) On April 4, Radhakrishan Damani - the promoter of Avenue Supermarts that owns D-Mart - donated Rs 100 crore to the PM-CARES Fund. It also contributed another Rs 55 crore towards various state relief funds. Damani made the donation through group company Bright Star Investments.
- 8) On April 3, Aditya Birla Group contributed Rs 400 crore to the PM-Cares Fund as a part of its overall commitment of Rs 500 crore. In partnership with Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, it also activated a 100-bed facility at Seven Hills Hospitals in Mumbai. Among other measures, the company also ear marker 200 beds in cities like Ujjain, Pune, Hazaribagh and Raigarh.
- 9) On March 31, the company announced on Twitter that it was making a "humble contribution" of Rs 500 crore. As always, we remain fully committed and united in the support to the nation," it said. Tata Group, in collaboration with Tata Trusts, has pledged Rs 1,500 crore for the cause.
- 10) On March 30, Reliance Industries was one of the earliest biggies to come forward and contribute to the PM-CARES Fund.

It announced Rs 500 crore contribution to the PM-CARES Fund in addition to its multi-pronged on-the-ground fight against COVID-19. In addition, it announced Rs 5 crore each to the Maharashtra CM Relief Fund and the Gujarat CM Relief Fund. While setting up a 100-bed hospital for corona virus patients, the company has been manufacturing one lakh masks each day. It has also been providing PPE protective gears and food for those in need.

Government's efforts for the public:

India announced a complete lock down for 21 days beginning midnight of 24 March 2020 as an all-out measure to tackle the spread of the novel corona virus disease COVID-19.

Some of the most empowered nations have become helpless in the face of the pandemic....social distancing is the only option for India to combat the corona virus," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a televised address to the nation. The three week lock down follows Modi's call for a day-long self-imposed curfew on 22 March. The 21 day lock down will be more stringent as the phase is very crucial to break the cycle of infection, he said, citing global infection figures from the World Health Organisation (WHO). During his speech, the Prime Minister also held up a poster that expanded "Corona" in Hindi to 'Koi Road pe na Nikle' (no one should venture out).

Because of this effort Bhilwara has become a global role model by breaking the corona chain with efforts made by the state government which include screening of 5 crore people and testing lakhs of households still date, said Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot.

He added that the first case in Rajasthan was reported on March 2, 2020 and strict measures were taken in the state on the very first day. "We sealed the borders the day we found a doctor being corona positive in Bhilwara and it is becoming a learning ground now. 22 lakhs families from villages, nearly 10 lakh households in the city were tested and hence Bhilwara set an example against corona in India," said Gehlot. The city has now recorded 17 recoveries with 11 discharged out of the 27 patients who reported positive. "We are working on a war-footing in a 6-part process beginning with the imposition of curfew, coordination work of police surveying colonies where the visitors at Bangar Hospital, where it all began, might be staying," said Harendra Mahawar, SP, Bhilwara.

In India, a few hotspots of COVID-19 were listed as the epicenters of corona virus out of which Bhilwara emerged in the list of 10 major spots. With 27 cases, the district was considered the worst hit in Rajasthan and for a few days, at the national level too.

4. Conclusion

By the present study we conclude that commendable steps have been taken by the government like nationwide Lockdown, Relief Package, Prime Minister Cares Fund. With this, crores of people will get some financial relief in this crisis. Avoidance of the corona virus is that we stay in the home and strictly follow the rules made by the administration.

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