

Tackling Covid in Palghar, Maharashtra

Second wave of Covid hit India really hard. Daily cases rising up to 300,000 was a scary scenario. Rural India i.e. Palghar district in Maharashtra was no exception. Fortunately by end May / early June the wave came under control. The cases started dropping. However, wild rumours spread through social media that vaccine can cause blindness or impotence or even death sent villagers running into forests at the mere site of our vehicle.

Our social workers do not believe in accepting defeat. They travelled from village to village, went from door to door, conducted series of discussions and informal village meetings, hung posters & banners in local language and answered every question to coax people for Covid Appropriate Behaviour and to reduce the fears about vaccination.

Slowly the vaccine hesitancy started to reduce. We embarked upon multiple vaccination drives. At our hospitals, in villages, in colleges, in small industrial units, wherever it was possible. We garnered a donor support of over \$125,000 and have vaccinated more than 22,000 so far including free vaccines to 11,000 poor and tribal people. More are being done every week.

Looking at the dedicated efforts of MLDT, Dr. Cyrus Poonawala, Chairman of Serum Institute of India (the company manufacturing the vaccines) donated 1000 vaccines to us. That immensely boosted the morale of all our staff.

The Government too has launched major vaccination drives and 50% of our villages are almost 100% (first dose) vaccinated. Needless to say, there is still a long way to go.

PPI has always stood firm with us for many years and supported whenever there was an emergency as well as routine projects. Your kind support for Covid benefitted about 1000 direct and more than 25,000 indirect beneficiaries.

No.	Activity	Remarks	Amount
1.	Education Material & dissemination in 25 villages	Several hoardings, banners were put up in villages and handbills were distributed. There are at least 25,000 indirect beneficiaries of this activity. Most of them have by now got vaccinated or soon will.	\$ 300
2.	Rapid Antigen Testing	We conducted this test on 278 suspected patients. These are our direct beneficiaries.	\$ 834
3.	Vaccination	683 villagers (direct beneficiaries) were vaccinated through your support. The vaccines were donated by Serum Institute of India. Admin cost per vaccination is \$2.	\$ 1366
	Total		\$ 2500

Thank you PPI