

## INCLUSIVE MINISTRY AMIDST COVID – 19 PANDEMIC

It was heartening to see courageous initiatives to reach out to the marginalized transgender communities during the COVID – 19 Pandemic by the NEFGSD members, some of the NCCI member churches and individuals in Telangana and Kerala. While social distancing has been the norm in the country, we saw some courageous steps being taken by these brave-hearts when they realised that there are those marginalized needing of basic needs during this lockdown. Here are some experiences as narrated to us from the field.



### *Telangana Outreach*

Rachana, a member of the NEFGSD (National Ecumenical Forum for Gender and Sexual Diversities) and the leader of the Telangana Hijra, Intersex and Transgender Samiti, organized food distribution among 40 Transgender people in six areas in Hyderabad. This was possible due to the support provided by Sribala, a staff of Henry Martin Institute, Hyderabad, who arranged these kits on her own initiative.

Ankit Bhuptani, also a member of the NEFGSD and the leader of the Queer Hindu Alliance, had initiated monetary support for several members from the Queer Community who were daily wagers and were affected from the lockdown as they didn't come under any Government register and were not accessible to other sources. He was able to organize support from his friends and reach out to 62 people across the country. Such effort continues on behalf of the QHA during this lockdown.



### *CSI Cochin Diocese*

Rev Dr Prakash Juswil, on behalf of the NEFGSD reached out to suffering transgender people in Kochi area, where he was able to connect with Rev Praise Thaiparambil, Director of Social Board of the Church of South India, Cochin Diocese and distribute food kits. They were able to reach out to 15 transgender persons as well as among some North Indian Coolie labourers in Kochi area.



### *Chennai Outreach*

In Chennai, as part of the NEFGSD, Fr Thomas Ninan was able to organize food kits for about 20 Transgender persons in Redhills region. Inba Ignatius, who played a key role in distributing the food kits conveyed that this community did not have any registration under the Government scheme and hence were suffering from lack of support.



### *From Kerala Council of Churches*

The Kerala Council of Churches also was active in distributing groceries, sanitizers, gloves and masks in two colonies, namely Chathimala and Pannithadam in Thiruvalla and Kollam districts, particularly among police officials and other volunteers on duty in Kerala. Adv Prakash P Thomas, the Secretary of KCC was actively coordinating the efforts.