

MOMENTUM

Routine Immunization Transformation and Equity



**Metro Construction Workers
Maharashtra**

The 1000+ strong family of migrant labourers working for Nagpur Metro Railway project, faced testing times during the COVID-19 pandemic. As more and more workers flocked home during the lethal second wave of the pandemic, many were trapped in their hometowns, and unable to return to work due to stoppage of public transportation, leading to overcrowding, and unemployment across the construction sector in India. Thus, when the Govt. of India rolled out a free COVID-19 vaccination program across the country, it was welcomed with relief and gratitude by the community.

The MOMENTUM Routine Immunization Transformation and Equity Project, supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), ensures equitable vaccination to vulnerable, hard-to-reach, and marginalized communities. The State Government collaborated with the Project, and delegated the awareness programs and vaccine dispensation activities to local change agents to increase vaccine uptake among under-represented groups. In Maharashtra, the Project has engaged with local Non Governmental Organizations like Marathwada Gramin Vikas Sanstha (MGVS), Transport Corporation of India Foundation (TCIF), YR Gaitonde Centre for AIDS Research and Education (YRG Care), The Leprosy Mission Trust India (TMLTI) India to build vaccine confidence amongst priority groups.

The Project team, working under the Government's supervision faced initial roadblocks including fear and misapprehensions in the migrant worker community of Nagpur. However, with consistent counselling sessions and use of community influencers, the team was able to go past hesitancies based on fears of severe side effects and fatality. Fear and reluctance went down dramatically over the time period between the first to the third vaccine, as workers opted to get vaccinated to return to work as soon as possible.

Today, the entire migrant Metro worker community of Nagpur is vaccinated against COVID- 19 and continue to pursue their profession fearlessly.

