

Centre asks 10 key states to implement targeted Covid 19 communication campaign

7 districts of Maharashtra including Mumbai, Thane and Pune among focus areas

Thrust of the campaign on inducing 'Covid appropriate behaviour'

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The Centre has asked 10 key states contributing 76% of all reported Covid -19 cases to implement targeted public communication campaign at the grass root level to encourage 'Covid appropriate behaviour' among the people in the worst affected districts. These 10 states are Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Kerala, Telangana and Delhi which have maximum number of active cases. Within Maharashtra, Mumbai, Thane, Pune, Nashik, Nagpur, Sangli and Kolhapur have been identified as key districts for intensive Covid communication.

Based on feedback and interactions with experts, the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has identified key communication pointers covering Covid appropriate behavior like hand hygiene, wearing of mask and safe distancing, de-stigmatization of disease, dos and don'ts regarding home isolation, warning against self medication etc.

To facilitate the implementation of the focused communication strategy, District Administrations have been asked to constitute District Level Communication Management Teams under the overall supervision of District Collector, with District Surveillance Officer, District Information Officer, representative of Information & Broadcasting Ministry and other experts as members. The District Surveillance Officer will be the Nodal Officer for this purpose.

The focus of the targeted communication campaign will be on inducing change in behavior and also on educating people on how to live with Covid 19 in the Unlock phase. All appropriate media vehicles like print media, electronic media, social media, outdoor media and folk media would be used to convey the message in an effective manner. DD Sahyadri and All India Radio would mount special programmes on Covid communication, while the support of FM radio channels and Community Radio Stations will also be sought.

The media units of Ministry of Information & Broadcasting like Press Information Bureau, field offices of the Bureau of Outreach Communication, Song & Drama troupes, which specialize in inter-personal communication would work in close coordination with state government organizations and supplement their efforts. At the state level, the campaign will be overseen by the Principal Secretary (Public Health), Government of Maharashtra and DG (West Zone) of Ministry of I&B.

Head start in Maharashtra

Meanwhile, the Government of Maharashtra has already launched a direct contact campaign "Maaze Kutumb, Maazi Jababdari" (My Family, My Responsibility) aimed at effective health care education for the control of Covid 19 outbreak. This campaign, being conducted in two phases during September and October has an ambitious target of reaching out to 2.25 crore households twice. Besides creating awareness about Covid 19, the campaign teams also carry out preliminary health checks to identify Covid 19 symptoms. Maharashtra Chief Minister Shri Uddhav Thackeray has appealed to all the citizens of the state to extend full cooperation for the 'My Family, My Responsibility' campaign.

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