

Addressing Social Stigma associated with COVID-19 Pandemic

Posted On: 16 MAR 2021 1:24PM by PIB Delhi

Addressal of stigma associated with COVID-19 and resulting discrimination faced by patients as well as healthcare workers involved in COVID-19 related activities is a major theme of COVID-19 communication strategy adopted by Government of India. Ministry of Health & Family Welfare launched an anti-stigma campaign with support of key development partners. In this regard, the following steps were taken up:

- i. Stigma and discrimination related messages were amplified across 12 lakh ASHAs and ANMs via pre-recorded phone messages.
- ii. Inspirational stories on healthcare service personnel disseminated through website, DD, radio and partner agencies.
- iii. Media, community radio, youth, volunteer and community health worker networks leveraged to take the critical message of anti-stigma.
- iv. Several audio videos, informative guidebooks, and social media creatives to dispel COVID-19 related stigma were developed and uploaded on Ministry of Health & Family Welfare's website, social media handles and amplified through State Government networks.
- v. Ministry of Health & Family Welfare issued advisory not to affix posters or other signages outside the residences of COVID-19 positive patients.

In the context of COVID-19, the Epidemic Diseases (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020 was promulgated on 22nd April 2020. Further this ordinance was brought before the Parliament has been passed and notified on 29th September 2020. The amendment provides for taking action as per this Act, against any individual who indulges in such social discriminatory behavior as to cause harassment of healthcare worker impacting the living or working conditions and preventing him/her from discharging their duties.

The Minister of State (Health and Family Welfare), Sh. Ashwini Kumar Choubey stated this in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha here today.

MV/SJ

(Release ID: 1705063)