

# Ministry of Panchayati Raj writes to States on preventive measures to curb the spread of COVID 19 in rural India

## Intensive communication campaign to be undertaken for awareness of rural communities

## States told to leverage available IT infra and various schemes to provide relief and rehabilitation at village level

Posted On: 11 MAY 2021 4:29PM by PIB Delhi

The Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj has written to all the State Governments to take preventive measures to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in rural India. To combat COVID 19, the Ministry in its letter has suggested States to sensitize and facilitate the Panchayats/Rural Local Bodies towards meeting the challenge and provide leadership.

The Ministry has advised to undertake an intensive communication campaign for the awareness of rural communities on the nature of the COVID infection and preventive and mitigation measures, in accordance with the advice of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), doctors and medical institutions etc., while especially taking care to dispel false notions and beliefs.

The Ministry has asked state governments to involve frontline volunteers from the local community for the campaign viz. elected panchayat representatives, teachers, ASHA workers etc. and they may also be suitably facilitated with necessary protective systems like finger oxy-meters, N-95 masks, infrared thermal scanning instruments, sanitizers etc.

To provide real-time information on availability of testing/vaccination centers, doctors, hospital beds etc. to rural citizens, the Ministry has advised state governments to leverage available IT infrastructure like Panchayat offices, Schools, Common Service Centers etc.

“The Panchayats may be activated to provide the necessary institutional village-level support catering to their respective locations. Wherever possible, they may improvise households as home quarantine locations, where maximum of the asymptomatic COVID positive cases can be managed. Additionally, they may also set up specific quarantine/isolation centers for the needy and returning migrant labourers. In consultation with the Health Department, the Panchayats may be designated to facilitate vaccination drives to ensure maximum coverage of eligible population”, the Ministry has suggested in its letter.

The Panchayati Raj Ministry has asked the States to leverage various Central and State Government schemes towards the provision of rations, drinking water supply, sanitation, MGNREGS employment etc. to

provide relief and rehabilitation at the village level to the needy.

To deal with an emergency situation, the Ministry has asked states government to establish proper inter-linkages with the medical facilities at the nearby District and Sub-Districts so that emergency requirements like ambulances, advanced testing and treatment facilities, multi-speciality care etc. are provided to those in need without much loss of time.

Shri Sunil Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj has requested States to set up a suitable inter-departmental Monitoring mechanism comprising of officers of Panchayati Raj, Rural Development, Health, Revenue, Women & Child Development, Education Departments at Block, District and State level to regularly monitor the functioning of the Gram Panchayats and their Committees in respect of tackling the COVID pandemic and related public health issues.

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(Release ID: 1717682)