

# 47 tribal hamlets in Dhule district have not seen a COVID-19 case so far, have set an example of how self-discipline and strict protocol can ensure a pandemic free world

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As a matter of serious concern, it was observed that the spread of COVID-19, which was limited to urban and semi-urban areas in the first wave did manage to permeate into the rural areas. Given the inadequate medical facilities and health infrastructure in rural areas, preventing the spread of Covid-19 continues to remain a challenge for the administration and the health department.

Each district of Maharashtra bore the brunt of coronavirus pandemic in the first wave, while the pandemic entered almost every city and village during the second wave that started in March 2021; barring few villages in Shirpur tehsil of Dhule district. As a shining example, 47 tribal hamlets of Shirpur continue to remain free of COVID-19 despite thousands testing positive and a few succumbing to the infection elsewhere in the district.

Thanks to the administration's efforts and to the villagers who followed every rule in the book to ensure that not a single person is infected in these 47 tribal-dominated hamlets including Shersinghpada, Borpani, Malpurpada, Amarpada, Chakdu, Wakpada and Sajgarpada.



The precautionary measures taken by the Gram Panchayat Administration and the Health Department and the positive response given by the villagers, have played a major role in



containment of the spread of Covid-19. The villagers strictly followed three golden rules of wearing face masks, washing hands frequently and maintaining social distancing, while the gram panchayat distributed sanitizers and undertook disinfection activities in the premises.



Dr. Prasanna Kulkarni, Health Officer of Shirpur has informed that the sparse population of the tribal village, the distance between the two houses, the preconceived notion of cleanliness in their premises, a naturally strong immune system of the tribal community and their nature-friendly lifestyle some of the reasons that have kept COVID-19 at bay. Besides, the Centre and State Governments' Covid awareness campaigns through radio, TV and traditional media and the regular health check-ups and awareness programmes conducted by the health department also proved beneficial.





Rahul Randhe, Deputy Sarpanch of Boradi village further said that the villagers, encouraged by Sarpanchs, Talathis and Gramsevaks followed COVID appropriate behaviour. The villagers took the initiative to seal their boundaries and prevent entry of outsiders in their bid to safeguard their premises from COVID-19.

This is truly a brilliant example of how the tribal community has prevented the spread of a deadly and contagious disease like Covid-19, by strictly following government norms and through self-discipline. Kudos to the joint efforts of the administration and the villagers, which has successfully contained the spread of Covid-19 in these 47 tribal hamlets.

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