

# Steps Taken to Minimize Impact of Covid-19 on Rural India

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Union Government has been providing required technical and financial assistance to all States/UTs for strengthening of their healthcare system including management of the COVID-19 Public Health Challenge from time to time.

In view of ingress of COVID-19 in rural areas besides the ongoing measures to control COVID-19 the following steps are taken:

- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021 issued a detailed SOP on COVID-19 Containment & Management in Peri-urban, Rural & Tribal areas. The SOP provides for strengthening primary level healthcare infrastructure at all levels to intensify COVID-19 response in peri-urban, rural & tribal areas, while continuing to provide other essential health services through inter-sectoral approach by involving community-based organizations, Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committees (VHSNCs), Pachayati Raj institutions, Urban Local bodies, etc.
- Under 'India COVID19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness package' of Rs 15,000 Cr was approved in April 2020 wherein States/UTs were provided required technical and financial assistance for strengthening of their healthcare system for management of the COVID-19 Public Health Challenge.
- This was primarily to support the States for the critical activities for surveillance and containment, for ramping up of testing and treatment facilities, for procurement of essential supplies, for engagement of critical HR etc.
- Following receipt of requests from States/UTs, States/UTs are allowed to utilize the uncommitted unspent opening balance under NHM of FY 21-22 from the previous year releases for COVID-19 management.
- In addition, 'India COVID-19 Emergency Response & Health System Preparedness Package: Phase-II' has also been approved by the Cabinet with Rs 23,123 crores (with Rs. 15,000 Cr as Central Component & Rs 8,123 as State component) and is to be implemented from 1st July 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.
- It includes support to State/UT level for ramping up health infrastructure including those in rural, tribal and peri-urban areas, providing support for procurement of drugs and diagnostics to enhance service delivery at district and sub district levels (including pediatric care) and for maintaining a buffer stock of drugs, support for IT Interventions such as implementation of Hospital Management Information System, expanding access to tele-consultations in all districts, and support for capacity building and training for all aspects of management of COVID-19.

Communication material and toolkits have been developed (pamphlets, poster, audio and AV films) and have been provided to the States for translation into local languages. Community is being briefed about action

taken by Ministry through electronic, print media & social media. Technical Officials from Ministry have attended various shows in Doordarshan/TV Channels to brief community at large. A dedicated Call Centre / Helpline (1075) guides community on COVID-19.

In addition, support from all other line Ministries like Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Ministry of Woman and Child Development is also taken along with all states/UTs to reach out & to amplify COVID related messages.

The Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar stated this in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha here today.

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HFW/Steps taken to minimize impact of COVID-19 on Rural India/20thJuly2021/3

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