

File No. J-11060/47/2019-RL
Government of India
Ministry of Rural Development
Department of Rural Development

Krishi Bhawan
New Delhi-110001
Dated: 4th April 2020

To
State Mission Director/CEO
State Rural Livelihoods Missions

Subject: Role of self-help groups in response to COVID-19 outbreak

Dear Madam/Sir,

It is heartening to learn that State Rural Livelihoods Missions (SRLMs) are taking various initiatives for addressing the COVID-19 outbreak related issues. The sensitivity and responsiveness demonstrated by Self-Help Group members in addressing various needs emerged due to the current situation at the community level is highly appreciable. In continuation of the earlier advisory dated 26.03.2020 (*copy attached for ready reference*), issued by this Ministry, I would like to reiterate/suggest the following for your information and necessary action

1. Self-Help Group network in the States provides an institutional structure to deliver and reiterate the right messages in the community to encourage adoption of practices recommended by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) with regard to response and containment of COVID-19. In this context, it is advised that SRLMs should augment their efforts for creating awareness amongst members and community on critical issues including social distancing, use of masks, recommended practices, quarantine and psycho-social issues of migrants, care of elderly population, mental health and wellbeing etc.
2. Also, SRLMs may coordinate with Department of Health and local authorities and enhance efforts on production of masks, sanitizers, protective gears like gowns etc to meet the demand from health department and. An advisory from Secretary, Rural Development (Copy attached) has also been sent to Chief Secretaries of all the States and UTs for supporting production of masks etc through RSETI trained candidates and using the RSETI infrastructure for producing them. *Advisories on easy methods of making of masks and right way of using masks and on Ayurvedic immunity boosting measures respectively, issued by M/o HFW and M/o AYUSH, are attached with the letter for ready reference.* So far about 132 Lakh masks have been produced by various SHGs across the country, having established the capacity for such large scale productions, the

same may be ramped up. The SRLMs may contact the state health Departments and District Officials to augment the supplies.

3. *Aarogya Setu* is a mobile application developed by the Government of India to connect essential health services with the people of India in our combined fight against COVID-19. The Application is aimed at augmenting the initiatives of the Government of India, particularly the Department of Health, in proactively reaching out to and informing the users regarding risks, best practices and relevant advisories pertaining to the containment of COVID-19. The application is available in 11 languages and operates both on Android and IOS mobile. All the SRLMs are requested to promote use of *Aarogya Setu* Application developed by MoHFW for staying informed and alert against COVID-19 (<https://www.mygov.in/aarogya-setu-app/>). Self-Help Group members shall also be encouraged to download this App to stay informed and updated.
4. For technical inputs and updates, it recommended to refer MoFHW website regularly (<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>). Websites of MoAYUSH (<http://ayush.gov.in/>), MoWCD (<https://wcd.nic.in/>), FSSAI (<https://www.fssai.gov.in/>) and Ministry of Consumer Affairs (<https://consumeraffairs.nic.in/>) shall also be referred from time to time.
5. We have been informed that in most states, SHGs/VOs/CLFs have also initiated work related to provision of ration or cooked food to poor and vulnerable families using the Vulnerability Reduction Fund or with support from State and district administration. We encourage such activities so as to ensure that no family is left hungry in these difficult times. SRLMs may like universalise such interventions through convergence with relevant departments, like Food and Civil Supplies, for providing rations to the needy families through the women's institutions.
6. It is again cautioned that SRLMs must ensure that members follow various advisories including social distancing issued by MoHFW and State Governments while undertaking any activity. *A pocket reference book on COVID-19 including precautions and safety measures to be followed has been issued by MoHFW and is also attached with the letter for reference and circulation.*

Enclosures: As mentioned above

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-
(Alka Upadhyaya)

Copy for information to:

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