

NRLM SELF HELP GROUP WOMEN EMERGE AS COMMUNITY WARRIORS TO CONTAIN THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 IN THE COUNTRY

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Ministry of Rural Development

NRLM Self Help Group women emerge as community warriors to contain the spread of COVID-19 in the country

About 2 crore masks have been produced by around 78,000 SHG members of 27 State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs);

More than 5000 PPE kits manufactured by SHGs in various states; Around 900 SHG enterprises in 9 States have produced more than 1 lakh litres of hand sanitiser, Some SHGs have also produced liquid soaps to guarantee hand hygiene

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COVID-19 outbreak has presented an unprecedented health emergency worldwide. In India, this has led to increased requirement of medical facilities including masks, personal protective equipment (PPE) and face shields for medical and police personnel, cleaning staff etc. Government is also making the use of masks by the citizens compulsory in most areas.

The strength of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), Ministry of Rural Development, are the approximately 690 lakh women members of around 63 lakh Self Help Groups (SHGs) across the country. SHG members have emerged as community warriors by contributing in every possible way to contain the spread of COVID-19. As the masks were the first line of defence against COVID-19, SHGs immediately took up the task of production of masks. Various categories of masks including 2-3 ply woven and non-woven surgical masks, cotton masks etc. adhering to the advisories of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Ministry of Consumers' Affairs and instructions of Health Departments from the states are produced by SHGs. The masks have been supplied to the health department, Local Self Government (LSGs), local administration, front line workers, police officials, and are also sold in open markets. It has also been distributed free to the rural households in many states. SHG members have now also started making Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) like aprons, gowns, face shields etc.

Details of masks, PPE, face shield etc produced through SHG network and media coverage are as follows:

A. Masks: As reported by 27 State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs), around 1.96 crore masks have been produced by the SHG members (as on 8th April 2020). Around 78,373 SHG members are presently involved in manufacturing of masks. Jharkhand SHGs were among the first to respond and have produced about 78,000 masks since March 22, 2020. These masks were being sold at the premises of various district collectorates and subsidised medical stores at an affordable price of Rs. 10/-.



Jharkhand SHG women producing masks (**Source: Twitter**)

- From the country's eastern region, 853 SHGs involving 2516 rural women of Chhattisgarh have supplied masks to the state. Self-help groups in Odisha have manufactured more than a million masks for distribution of masks among common people. Arunachal Pradesh Municipal Corporation has asked SHGs to supply 10,000 face masks to prevent the spread of highly infectious COVID-19.
- In Andhra Pradesh, 2254 groups of 13 sub-blocks of the district have followed the guidelines of government for the manufacturing of cloth face masks. Similarly, Karnataka rural self-help groups have produced 1.56 lakhs face masks just in 12 days with their dedication to prevent the spread of disease in the state.
- Northern Goa district rural development agency through the help of SHGs has supplied 2,000 masks across the state. To cater the increased demand of masks, Himachal Pradesh SHGs with 2000 women members are completely indulged in preparation and production of protective masks.

B. Personal Protective Equipment: SHG members are also manufacturing PPE including aprons, gowns, face shields etc. Around 5000 PPE kits have been manufactured so far by SHGs in various states including MP, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Karnataka. Punjab SRLM reported supply of 500 aprons to Civil Surgeon,

Kapurthala. Meghalaya reported supply of 200 face shields to district Medical Health officer. Karnataka reported production of 125 face shields. SRLMs of Meghalaya, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab have reported production of face shields, gowns by the SHG members.

C. Women collectives step up to promote hand hygiene in their communities with affordable hand Sanitizers

The micro-enterprises supported by DAY-NRLM have taken up the production of hand sanitisers and hand wash products to ensure the availability in rural areas. 900 SHG enterprises in 9 States have produced 1.15 lakh litres of sanitisers with the production in the three States of Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh exceeding 25,000 litres each. Around 900 SHG enterprises located across the states of Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Manipur, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Mizoram are producing sanitizers to feed soaring demand.



Following guidelines proposed by World Health Organization (WHO), a well-measured mix of four ingredients has been used to develop these sanitizers in Jharkhand. The sanitizer has been developed using alcohol (72%), distilled water (13%), glycerin (13%) and basil (2%). For their medicinal effects, lemon grass or basil are being added to the hand sanitizer to increase its effectiveness in destroying the virus. Priced modestly at Rs. 30/- per 100 ml bottle of sanitizer, they are being made available to the general public, hospitals and police stations.

Some SHGs have also been selling liquid soaps to guarantee safe hand hygiene. SHG units located in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tamil Nadu have also been able to produce 50,000 litres of hand-washing products.

Sustaining their livelihoods through socially responsive contributions in promoting safe hygiene practices within their respective communities, these women have been fighting the COVID-19 outbreak with utmost dedication and devotion.

APS/SG/PK

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