

Use of innovative communication and behavior change tools by SHG Women to generate awareness and help containment of COVID-19

Introduction:

On the rising of COVID-19 cases in India, networks under DAY-NRLM were used to generate awareness and help stop spreading of the virus. For that, awareness generation efforts used communication and behaviour change tools by women of SHG networks.

Background:

Audio Visual (AV) IEC material and advisories developed by Health Ministry were circulated to all SRLMs to spread awareness on the need to maintain personal hygiene, social distancing etc. All such information, along with material developed by the state governments are being used by the State Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLMs) to ensure that the correct message is communicated to the community about all required precautions. The SRLM staff and SHGs members are creating awareness in the local communities by various means such as telephone calls, wall writings, pamphlets/fliers etc. Social media is also being used extensively.

Details of the Intervention:

Some of the more important interventions in the country on the advent of COVID-19 were done by SRLMs under DAY-NRLM. One of them is the JEEViKA Bihar, which stepped in as soon as COVID-19 was announced as a global pandemic. JEEViKA started working on IEC materials that would help in awareness and preparedness for the outbreak and systematically reach out to a maximum number of households through its 1.4 Lakh SHGs and spread the awareness on topics such as hand wash, sanitation, quarantine and isolation and social-distancing.

In addition, SHG women from UP SRLM 'Prerna' have used their creativity to make rangolis and mark lines and circles to re-emphasize the need for 'social distancing'. They have also been making wall paintings to spread key messages about COVID prevention in their communities.

The Didi helpline, a telephonic helpline initiated by Jharkhand SRLM, is open 24 hours to help migrant laborers by providing them verified information. It enables them to provide their data to state authorities to help evacuate them from different states, back to Jharkhand.

Notable efforts have been made by women of Kudumbashree in Kerala, to help dispel the widespread fake news that causes panic. Platforms are used specifically to disseminate immediate, authentic information and updates on the outbreak and precautionary measures.

Impact:

JEEViKA has till date collected mobile numbers more than 1,00,000 of community members and is using the Mobile Vaani platform to release voice messages on COVID-19 and is also addressing the community's queries through the same.

Through a network of WhatsApp groups with 1,16,396 women members, Kudumbasree is trying to propagate only the right information to the community.

Source: Ministry of Rural Development. (2020). NRLM Self Help Group network rises to the challenge of COVID-19 situation in the country. Retrieved from <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1613605>. Accessed on 12/6/2020.