How Tripura promotes hygiene & sanitation amid COVID-19

Good hygiene is key towards protecting yourself and others from COVID-19. It is to ensure this as well as safe sanitation, the Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G) team of Tripura is conducting various IEC (Information Education Communication) and IPC (Interpersonal Communication) programmes in the Gram Panchayats.

While IPC refers to face to face verbal or non-verbal exchange of information between two or more people, IEC creates awareness, provides knowledge, and contributes to changing behaviours.

Since the start of the pandemic, team Tripura has been conducting awareness generation programmes about safety protocols to observe to prevent the spread of the infection.

Initially, the services of a local NGO were enlisted to organise awareness meetings across the rural areas. This was done with the support of the Gram Pradhans, PRI (Panchayat Raj Institution) members and ASHA workers. The meetings which took place adhered to social distancing norms as also the use of masks and hand sanitizers.

Thereafter, key audio messages on safe sanitation practices and ways to tackle coronavirus pandemic were played on the radio and on vehicles fitted with public address systems that were plied across all villages.

In public spaces of the villages, banners were affixed in prominent places on proper handling and usage of drinking water and sanitary practices to be followed,
The **door to door campaigns** also played a major role in promoting awareness. Members of local NGOs visited households and spoke to people about maintaining hygiene within the house and immediate surroundings. While masks and soaps were distributed, proper handwashing techniques were also demonstrated. The importance of drinking clean water and maintaining sanitation facilities have been promoted through IPC and distribution of leaflets.

A wide range of **jingles** to inform people of ways COVID-19 can be transmitted and the need to follow safe sanitation practices were played on the local FM stations. Those jingles could also be accessed on mobile phones. Also, **TV spots** were created and broadcast on Doordarshan Kendra-Agartala and other local TV channels.

Such **mass media campaigns** have played an important role in sensitising people to maintain social distancing and follow safety protocols.