

## Sarpanches share covid safety protocols of their villages



As heads of their respective villages, Sarpanches have a major role to play in promoting hygiene and sanitation in their villages and at the same time protecting their communities from the COVID-19 pandemic. Taking their roles very seriously, Sarpanches across the country have put in place various covid safety protocols while extensively using IEC to promote key messages.



During a Sarpanch Samvad held on April 23, 2021, Sarpanches shared the measures they have been implementing to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Among the participants were - Shri Kesala Malareddy, Sarpanch – Sangareddy District of Telangana; Ms. Gurpreet Kaur, Sarpanch – Jalandhar District of Punjab; Shri Vinayak Misal, Sarpanch – Solapur District of Maharashtra and Ms.

Rajarani Benson, Sarpanch – Warangal Urban District of Telangana.

Welcoming the participants to the virtual meeting, SBM-G Director, Mr. Yugal Joshi saluted the participants for their admirable work both in SBM-G and in covid related matters. He attributed to them the success of the sanitation campaign.



Introducing the Sarpanches, Mr. Rajiv Jauhari, Deputy Secretary, DDWS invited the village leaders to share their experiences in SBM-G Phase II and in covid related matters: how they are handling the covid situation, and what they tell people.

According to Mr. Mallareddy, their village has installed 40 cameras and 25 loudspeakers and using mics, they make announcements about curfews, government orders regarding covid safety protocols, etc. In addition, they have erected banners and created wall paintings to remind people about keeping safe. With the help of the cameras, the PRI members enforce strict curfew while allowing people to visit the pharmacy or hospitals. Meanwhile, they periodically spray disinfectant in

various public spaces.

The Sarpanch also provided information about how solid and liquid waste is managed in their village, thanks to their modern dumping yard, incinerator, and individual and community soak pits.

Ms. Gurpreet Kaur said that being a woman, she is keen to solve issues and complete tasks in service of the community. Besides providing updates on covid safety protocols such as using masks and sanitizers, physical distancing, and regular handwashing, she has ensured that covid positive patients are provided with food essentials and medicines. Significantly, the Whatsapp group of her community is used to share important messages about care for the elderly, and how to safely quarantine themselves should they contract the covid infection. Announcements are also made in the Gurudwara about vaccines, etc.

On solid waste management, the Lady Sarpanch informed that they have a ladies' group which visits homes to advise people about keeping their homes and surroundings clean.

Another Sarpanch who joined the virtual meeting was Mr. Vinayak who was keen to participate even though he was suffering from COVID. He talked about the Rapid Antigen Tests being carried out in his village where there were some positive cases. While sanitization of the entire village is done via their tractor every 4 days, they ensure that the village is clean and advise people to stay indoors. The village also has a team to enforce covid safety protocols.

In a Warangal Urban village, Sarpanch Bindu Benson informed that announcements are made regularly about covid safety protocols. If anyone is found to be covid positive, food items such as rice, oil, vegetables, and eggs are sent to their homes. Even as night curfew has been enforced with immediate effect, people are not allowed to venture out of their homes without masks.

The morning garbage tractor plays a dual role – to make announcements about covid safety and to collect both wet and dry garbage. Tents have been erected at the Primary Health Centre with water facility where daily tests are conducted.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Jauhari said that we had a lot to learn from the Sarpanches who continue to carry out their duties despite the situation. They have shown grit and determination and positivity which can turn things around, he said.

