

# Kudumbashree launches special drive to help elderly during lockdown

*The programme aims to give extra care to their mental health and boost their confidence.*



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By [Express News Service](#)

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Kudumbashree Mission has launched a special initiative to ensure the well-being of elderly people in the state during the Covid-19 lockdown, by reaching out to families with a string of confidence-building measures. The thrust of the outreach programme is to take care of the mental health of the elderly and boost their confidence through Information, Education and Communication (IEC) programme.

“There are chances of comorbidity and low immunity among elderly people. So, it makes them vulnerable to the pandemic. We could convey the message successfully to around 43 lakh people through the IEC campaign,” said S Harikishore, Executive Director, Kudumbashree. The programme, which focuses on the message “elderly should take extra precaution”, is one of the three campaigns aimed at ensuring the well-being of senior citizens. A letter and a video message were shared among ‘ayalkoottams’ (neighbourhood groups) to create a sense of seriousness among the public.



“There are three lakh ayalkoottams in Kerala and around 43 lakh people are part of it. Just before the lockdown began, the Kudumbashree had sent a discussion note to all neighbourhood groups. Apart from the message to the elderly people, the focus of the note was to effectively implement ‘Break the Chain’ campaign and social distancing. We have covered around 50 per cent of the families in the state,” said Harikishore. In the second phase, Kudumbashree targeted two groups -- home quarantined elderly people and those above 60 years from destitute families.

“Among the 1,50,000 people quarantined at home, around 5,000 elderly people were primary contacts. Since they are the most vulnerable, Kudumbashree gave special care to them as per the directions of the Health Department,” the official said. Kudumbashree has mobilised and trained 786 volunteers and each of them got in touch with 10 people. “The one-to-one contact campaign with the elderly has been effective. It also has a touch of care,” he said.

Expressing happiness over Kudumbashree teams making one-to-one contact with such a large number of people in destitute and quarantined families, Harikishore said it boosted their confidence considerably. The third phase of the campaign targeted elderly people in destitute families under ‘Destitute Free Kerala’ project of Kudumbashree. “There are around 1.14 lakh elderly people in the 1.54 lakh destitute families in the state. We designated 2,176 resource persons, who contacted the elderly once in five days. So far, we have covered 95 per cent of such people,” he said.