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COVID-19 Lockdown: Kudumbashree Takes Special Initiatives for Elderly in Kerala

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(<https://www.newsclick.in/sites/default/files/2020-04/ederly%209.jpeg>)

Representational Image. Image Courtesy: PTI

Thiruvananthapuram: Kudumbashree, hailed as one of the world's largest women empowerment and poverty eradication missions, has launched a special initiative for the well-being of the elderly in Kerala during the COVID-19 lockdown with a string of confidence-building measures.

The thrust of the outreach has been to take care of the mental health of the elderly and boost their confidence through IEC (Information, Education and Communication) programme.

There are chances of co-morbidity and low immunity among the elderly people. So, it makes them vulnerable to the epidemic. We could successfully convey the message to around 43 lakh people through the IEC campaign, said S Harikishore, Executive Director, Kudumbashree, which functions as a community organisation of Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs) of women in Kerala.



The programme, which focuses on the message that elderly should take extra precaution, is one of the
the campaigns catering to the senior citizens.

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A letter and a video message from the Executive Director were distributed to Ayalkoottams (neighbourhood groups), apart from SMS and posters through WhatsApp, to create a sense of seriousness among the public, he noted.

There are three lakh Ayalkoottams in Kerala and around 43 lakh people are part of it. Just before lockdown got underway, Kudumbashree sent a discussion note to all neighbourhood groups, which they discussed in their meetings," Harikishore said.

"Apart from the message to the elderly, the focus of the note was to effectively implement Break the Chain campaign and social distancing. So, I can confidently say that we have covered around 50% of families, he said.

In the second round, Kudumbashree targeted two groups: quarantined elders at home and people above 60 years from destitute families.

Among the 1,50,000 people, who were quarantined at home, around 5,000 elderly people were primary contacts. Since they are the most vulnerable, as per the directions of the Health Department, Kudumbashree gave special care to them, the official pointed out.

Kudumbashree has mobilised and trained 786 volunteers with each one of them contacting 10 people. The one-to-one contact campaign with the elderly is 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.

Among 1.54 lakh destitute families, there are 1.14 lakh elderly people. We designated 2,176 resource persons and they contacted them once in five days. So far, we have covered 95% of such vulnerable people, he added.

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