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Kudumbashree workers have their plate full during lockdown



STAFF REPORTER

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Community counsellors offer solace to the elderly and isolated

From COVID-19-related awareness to counselling and mental support, Kudumbashree groups and volunteers in the State have their plate full during the lockdown period.

Kudumbashree's Snehitha help desk that focuses on women, children, and the elderly has been abuzz with calls since the lockdown was imposed. As many as 360 community counsellors have been reaching out to the elderly and isolated to offer solace, besides referring more serious mental health issues to one of the two counsellors in each district.

Fearing that instances of domestic violence might be underreported either because perpetrators of violence were always at home, making it difficult for women to report them, or because women might think that the police or other sources of help would be out of reach in the midst of a pandemic, an information campaign was launched with posters, videos, and audio clips online to reach out to women and remind them of the help desk, said Jesmin George, a Snehitha counsellor.

Besides running 1,100 community kitchens, including 13 kitchens at check-posts across the State for truckers, Kudumbashree volunteers have also been preparing grocery kits for 87 lakh families.

Kudumbashree is also in the process of assessing the demand from neighbourhood groups for the interest-free Helping Hand loan scheme, said S. Harikishore, Kudumbashree Executive Director. ₹2,000 crore worth of loans will be made available through Kudumbashree to tide over lockdown-induced financial losses.

Members of neighbourhood groups or their families will be eligible for loans between ₹5,000 and ₹20,000 under the scheme. Neighbourhood groups will begin sending their applications to banks by April 15, Mr. Harikishore said.