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AJAY BHALLA, IAS



गृह सचिव  
Home Secretary  
भारत सरकार  
Government of India  
नॉर्थ ब्लॉक/North Block  
नई दिल्ली/New Delhi

No. 40-3/2020-DM-I(A)

26<sup>th</sup> April, 2021

Dear Chief Secretary,

Please refer to the guidelines for effective control of COVID-19, issued vide Ministry of Home Affairs' (MHA) Order of even No. dated 23.03.2021, wherein it is prescribed that States and UTs, based on their assessment of the situation, may impose local restrictions at district/sub-district and city/ward level, with a view to contain the spread of COVID-19.

2. In the recent past, a sharp increase in COVID-19 cases has been observed along with high positivity rate. Considering this unprecedented surge, there is an urgent need for States/UTs to consider strict COVID management and control measures, in the surge areas to bring the situation under control. Accordingly, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), vide their DO no. Z.28015/85/2021-DM Cell dated 25th April 2021, has advised all States and UT Governments to implement an intensive, local and focused containment framework, focused on specific districts/ cities/ areas, and identified based on a prescribed criterion. The containment framework has been outlined in detail in the Annexure to the said MoHFW letter (copy enclosed). All States/UTs have also been advised to consider a further graded response in accordance with local situation, requirements and resources.

3. I would, therefore, urge you to issue directions to district authorities in your State/UT, to take all necessary measures, as advised by MoHFW in their letter, for the implementation of the containment framework, so as to flatten the curve. I would also advise that Orders issued by the respective State Governments/UT Administrations/district authorities, for imposing restrictions, should be widely disseminated to the public and to the field functionaries for their effective implementation.

With regards,

Encl. as above

Yours sincerely,

  
(Ajay Bhalla)

**Chief Secretaries of all States**



**Annexure to Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) DO no.  
Z.28015/85/2021-DM Cell dated 25th April 2021**

**Annexure – A  
Implementation Framework for community containment/large containment areas**

**Understanding the virus transmission dynamics:**

The virus transmits through the human host. It is imperative to understand that in order to contain the transmission of the virus, the strategies involve not just containing the virus but also the human host.

Broadly, the **strategies** are:

1. **Individual actions** such as wearing of masks, maintaining a distance of 6 feet from others, sanitizing one's hands frequently and not attending any mass gathering; and
2. **Public Health measures** to contain the virus by:
  - **quarantining** and testing individuals suspected to be positive including contacts of SARS-CoV-2 positive persons, SARI cases, persons with flu like symptoms etc. and ensuring that they are not mobile and thus able to spread the infection
  - **isolating** all those who are positive, tracing their contacts, quarantining and testing them.
  - where there are clusters of cases, simply quarantining individuals or families will not help. In that case, **containment zones** with clear boundaries and stringent controls will be required to ensure that the infection does not spread outside. This is in line with the containment strategy followed worldwide and also already enumerated in SOPs of the Ministry of Health. This would mean a large geographical area like a city or district or well defined parts thereof, where cases are high and spiraling up, gets contained physically, However, regulated movement of public transport would be permitted.
3. **Evidence Based Decision:** The decision on where and when to go for large Containment Zone (CZ) has to be evidence based and done at the State/UT level after proper analysis of the situation, such as; the population affected, the geographical spread, the hospital infrastructure, manpower, the ease of enforcing boundaries etc.
4. However, in order to facilitate objective, transparent, and epidemiologically sound decision making, the following broad-based framework is provided to aid States UTs in selection of districts/areas:

S. No.	Parameter	Thresholds
1	Test positivity	Test positivity of 10% or more in the last one week
<i>OR</i>		
2	Bed occupancy	Bed occupancy of more than 60% on either oxygen supported or ICU beds

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5. The areas requiring **Intensive action and local containment** connotes specific and well defined geographical units such as cities/town/part of the towns/district headquarters/semi-urban localities/municipal wards/*panchayat areas* etc.
6. The areas so identified for intensive action and local containment will primarily focus on **the following strategic areas of intervention:**

**A. Containment**

- i. Focus will be on **containment** as a **major approach** to flatten the current curve of the epidemic.
- ii. **Night curfew:** Movement of individuals shall be strictly prohibited during night hours, except for essential activities. Local administration shall decide the duration of the night curfew hours and issue orders, in the entire area of their jurisdiction, under appropriate provisions of law, such as under Section 144 of CrPC, and ensure strict compliance.
- iii. The spread of the infection has to be controlled through **restricting the intermingling amongst people**, the only known host for the COVID-19 virus.
- iv. Social/ political / sports / entertainment / academic / cultural / religious / festival-related and other **gathering and congregations shall be prohibited.**
- v. **Marriages (attended by up to 50 persons) and funerals/ last rites (attended by up to 20 persons) may be allowed.**
- vi. All shopping complexes, cinema halls, restaurants & bars, sports complexes, gym, spas, swimming pool and religious places should remain closed.
- vii. **Essential services and activities** such as **healthcare services, police, fire, banks, electricity, water and sanitation, regulated movement of public transport** including all **incidental services and activities** needed for a smooth functioning of these activities **shall continue.** Such services shall continue in both **public and private sector.**
- viii. **Public transport** (railways, metros, buses, cabs) **to operate at a maximum capacity of 50%.**
- ix. There shall be **no restrictions on inter-state and intra-state movement including transportation of essential goods.**
- x. All **offices**, both government and private, to function with a **maximum staff strength of 50%.**
- xi. **All industrial and scientific establishments**, both government and private may be **allowed** subject to the **workforce following physical distancing norms.** They shall also be tested through RAT (in case of individuals identified with flu like symptoms) from time to time.
- xii. The SOPs already issued by MoHFW, including training manuals for surveillance teams and supervisors are available on the website & must be followed.
- xiii. **However, these are indicative activities, and States/ UTs should make a careful analysis of the local situation, areas to be covered, and probability of transmission and then take a decision.**



- xiv. The restrictions as above shall continue for a **period of 14 days.**
- xv. **Before declaring a containment area, make a public announcement, outlining the rationale for the same and the kind of restrictions that will be in place (a leaflet in local language may be distributed highlighting the gravity of the situation and restrictions to be followed)**
- xvi. **Community volunteers, civil society organizations, ex- servicemen, and members of the local NYK/NSS centers etc. should be involved for sustainable management of containment activities, translating the aforementioned leaflets and for encouraging people in the community for sustained behavior change as well as vaccination.**

### **B. Testing and Surveillance**

Districts will continue with the strategy of **'Test-Track-Treat-Vaccinate'** and **implementation of Covid Appropriate Behavior across the district** as the ongoing strategy for the management of COVID-19.

- i. **Ensure adequate testing and door to door case search** in the area through adequate number of teams formed for such purpose.
- ii. **Plan for testing of all clinically resembling cases** of Influenza like illness (ILI) & SARI through **RAT**. All symptomatic individuals turning out to be negative for SARS-CoV-2 infection with RAT need to be **retested through RT PCR**.
- iii. **Ensuring compliance of COVID Appropriate Behaviour** aggressively both through creation of awareness through involvement of the community based organizations and through stringent regulatory framework.

### **C. Clinical Management**

- i. Analysis to be undertaken with respect to **requirement of health infrastructure** so as to **manage the present and projected cases (next one month)** and necessary action initiated to ensure sufficient oxygen-supported beds, ICU beds, ventilators, ambulances including creation of makeshift hospitals, as needed. Sufficient quarantine facilities shall also be re-activated.
- ii. Leverage **government, private health facilities** including hospital facilities available with **central ministries, railway coaches, temporary field hospitals etc.**
- iii. Ensure that people satisfying protocol for home isolation only are allowed under **home isolation**. Create a **mechanism for their regular monitoring** through Call Centres along with **regular visit of surveillance teams** to such houses.
- iv. Provision of a **customized kit** for all patients under home isolation, **including detailed dos and don'ts** to be followed by them.
- v. Specific **monitoring** shall be done for **high risk cases** and their timely shifting to the health facility. Similarly, **elderly and co-morbid contacts** of positive cases shall be **shifted to quarantine centres** and monitored.

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- vi. Appoint **senior district officials as In-charge** for all Covid dedicated hospitals and create a **mechanism for seamless shifting** of patients (including home isolation cases) as per their symptom to the relevant facilities.
- vii. Ensure availability of **sufficient ambulances** for such purpose.
- viii. Coordinate **availability of oxygen, other related logistics, drugs** etc. in collaboration with state officials and ensure their rational use.
- ix. **Oxygen therapy** for the admitted cases shall follow the **guidelines issued by Ministry of Health** on the **rational use** of oxygen
- x. Use of **investigative drugs** (Remdesivir / Tocilizumab etc.) shall also **strictly follow the clinical management protocol/advisories issued by Ministry of Health.**
- xi. **Facility wise cases and deaths** shall be analyzed on **daily basis** by the **Incident Commander/District Collector/Municipal Commissioner.** **Death-audit** shall be undertaken for **all deaths** in the hospitals and in the community to provide supportive supervision to field staff/hospitals.

#### **D. Vaccination**

**100% vaccination** for the **eligible age-groups** shall be undertaken duly **creating additional vaccination centres and optimal capacity utilization of existing Centres.**

#### **E. Community Engagement**

- i. Ensure **adequate advance information to community**, also highlighting the need for stringent containment actions so as to win their involvement and support.
- ii. Provide enough time for people movement for essential requirements etc. before announcing the large scale containment
- iii. Take necessary actions to **avoid misinformation & panic** in the community.
- iv. **Involve local level NGOs/CBOs/CSOs, Opinion Makers and subject experts** to create a positive environment and for sustained dialogue with the community.
- v. **Create wide publicity on early warning signals** and self-reporting so as to identify cases early and to prevent avoidable deaths among home isolation patients.
- vi. Give **wide publicity on the mechanism** whereby people can get themselves tested, details of available health facilities, requisitioning an ambulance etc (community based organizations should be encouraged to create WhatsApp groups for quick dissemination of information so that the individuals in need of prevention and/or care services do not suffer delay).
- vii. Ensure that **details of hospital beds and their vacancy status is made available on-line and also released to media on a daily basis.**
- viii. Details on **availability of oxygen, drugs, vaccine and vaccination centres;** including the guidelines related with use of Remdesivir/Tocilizumab etc. be also widely publicized so as to create confidence in the community.

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- ix. Community should be oriented about the feasibility of managing mild COVID-19 cases at home with appropriate monitoring of vital parameters such as temperature and oxygen saturation with the help of pulse oxymeter.
- x. **Need for COVID Appropriate Behaviour** including **regulatory framework for enforcement** should be **widely publicized**.
- xi. **Build confidence** in community duly highlighting the nature of disease, the fact **that early identification** helps in early recovery and more than 98% people recover to **remove fear as well as stigma** related with Covid-19. Involvement of civil society organizations to hold such orientations go a long way in this regard.