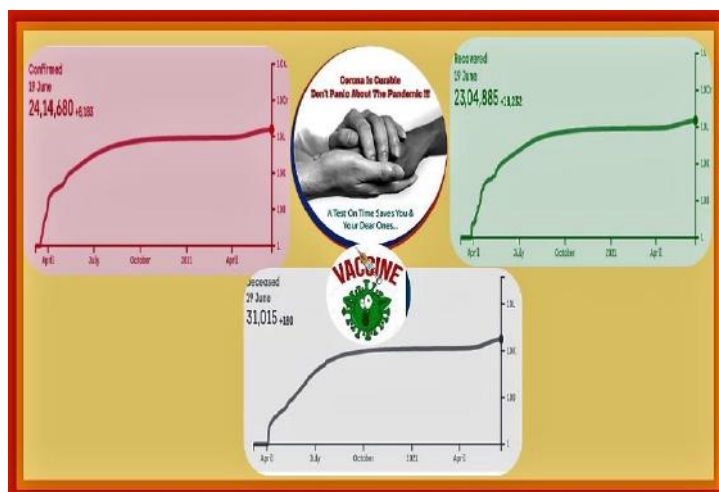


## **COVID INITIATIVES IN TAMIL NADU**



The first case of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu was reported on 7 March 2020. The largest single-day spike (30,987 cases) was reported on 13 May 2021. The number of confirmed COVID cases in Tamil Nadu as on 19.06.2021 stood 24,14,680, out of which 23,04,885 persons have covered. Around 1.39 crore people were vaccinated.

The Tamil Nadu government came out with a series of responses to mitigate the COVID-19, viz., (i) readying Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) at state and district levels, (ii) setting up of a 24/7 control room, (iii) thermal scanning of air travellers from China, (iv) creating isolation wards in the General Hospitals of four major cities, and (v) running appropriate awareness campaigns.

**Some of the other early measures are summarised below:**

### **Health measures**

- The State Government has issued preventive instruction through various circulars, viz., thermal scanning at all the Government Departments and public places, meetings to be convened only through online mode, Hand Sanitizers be provided at all the public places, Cleaning and disinfection of the office premises and quarters at regular intervals and gatherings in the offices should be avoided.
- TNSG ensured establishment of 24x7 District Level Control Room, availability of adequate PPE Kits, thermal scanner, triple layer mask, N95 Mask and social distancing. Forming a District Level Rapid Response Team, screening and IEC at check posts in interstate borders. Display of posters. TNSG sanctioned an amount of Rs.8.01 crores towards procurement of PPE, N95 Masks, Triple Layer masks, activities for preparedness measures for prevention and control of Influenza like illness and Severe Acute Respiratory Infections (SARI) like COVID-19 as an emergency measure.
- TNSG set the criteria for classification of hotspots, containment plan.
- Besides 950 ambulances operating in the State, TNSG has hired 50 ambulances for emergency purposes to fight COVID-19 at a cost of Rs.3.65 crores and further sanctioned Rs.103.50 crores to procure 500 ambulances fitted with all the medical equipment to address the emergent need of increased number of patients getting admitted due to COVID-19.
- To restrict unnecessary travel, TNSG issued orders for compulsory “E-Pass” through TGN e-Registration for Travellers.
- A very important measure for developing immunity against the COVID infection, TNSG has been recommended vide Letter No.1714 dated 25.04.2020,

viz., Nilavembu Kudineer and Kabasura Kudineer Herbal Powder which has played a very vital role in stabilizing the disease to some extent.

- TNSG has constituted Task Force Committee at The State and District Level to conduct audit on cases of deaths due to COVID-19 to ascertain the exact nature.
- TNSG has issued orders violation of quarantine and social distancing, non-wearing of mask and spitting in public places as compoundable under offences under TN Public Health Act, 1939 and authorized the Government Officials to collect fine.
- TNSG accorded sanction for a sum of Rs. 75.28 Crores for providing oxygen pipelines, CSSD strengthening, laundry room and other civil works in Government Medical Colleges and also sanctioned Rs.42.50 crores to meet the expenditure towards Feeding/Dietary charges for COVID-19 patients undergoing treatment covering 2210 Medical & Public Health Institutions and 110 Hospitals and Dispensaries.
- Under GOI Package COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package has acquired 50 mobile IEC Vans with an amount of Rs.2.00 crores to intensify and widely conduct the IEC activities, viz., wearing face masks, social distancing and hand washing among the people in gathering areas like markets, shopping centres, bus stand, temples and prominent public places.
- TNSG has also sanctioned Rs.199 crores under the above package as Grant for constitution of dedicated COVID-19 Hospitals, isolation rooms, strengthening of labs, procurement of N95 Masks and PPEs, expansion of diagnostic capacities, outreach survey and community surveillance activities.
- To tackle the price for COVID tests, TNSG fixed the cost of RT-PCR Test rates as Rs.800/- for Government Hospitals and Rs.1200/- for Private Labs.
- In order provide sufficient Oxygen to hospitals, TNSG has sanctioned three Oxygen generating plants in Govt. Taluk Hospitals at Valparai and Kodaikanal and Uthagamandalam with a cost of Rs.225.00 lakhs and allocated Rs.81.60 crores as temporary measures to make payment to the oxygen suppliers directly to ensure uninterrupted supply of liquid oxygen to the Government Hospitals during the present emergency situation. Government has also procured around 110 MTs of oxygen from Rourkela, Orissa.
- TNSG has constituted State Steering Committee, State Task Force and District Task Force for planning and implementation of various activities, smooth implementation and overall management of the entire process introduction of COVID-19 Vaccine.
- TNSG has launched CM Comprehensive Health Insurance Schemes to provide affordable and quality health services to the people. Besides this, TNSG has appointed 780 Non service Post Graduates on a temporary basis to tackle the COVID-19 cases with an amount of Rs. 18.07 Crores.
- TNSG appointed 2100 medical officers on a contract basis at a cost of Rs. 75.60 Crores to handle the COVID exigencies in government hospitals.
- TNSG announced free vaccination in all government hospitals and PHCs for individuals in the age group of 18-44.
- TNSG have issued orders for treating MUCORMYCOSIS as notified disease and also constituted a task force under chairmanship of director of medical education to advise on issues relating to MUCORMYCOSIS, its prevention and treatment.
- TNSG has declared 15 medical items, viz., sanitizers masks, PPE Kits, surgical gloves and gowns, oxygen mask and face shields as essential articles under the

TN Essential Articles Control and Requisitioning Act, 1949 to provide the products at reasonable prices to the common people.

- Amidst a rise in the number of cases, on April 4, the government issued instructions to: (i) avoid all kinds of religious gatherings, (ii) hospitals to not show religious bias in treating patients, and (iii) doctors to coordinate with the government and check in on the mental health of quarantined patients via video conferencing facilities such as Skype.

## **Education**

- TNSG issued guidelines for Digital/Online Education for schools during the Pandemic. It has taken a policy decision to encourage e-governance in all spheres. It has developed a digital content and hosting the same in DIKSHA, a National digital platform.
- The programmes like Veettupalli (School at Home) were telecast through Kalvi TV. e-Pathshala through NCERT was a game changer in online education.
- TNSG has taken many measures to improve the availability of digitally-enabled content textbooks, video recordings, TV episodes, online assessments to help the children during the Pandemic.
- TN SCHOOLS e-learn and TN-DIKSHA, TN Teachers Platform, KALVI TV (Youtube Channel) and NEET Exercises through online tests.
- TNSG has announced that Rs 5.00 lakh will be deposited in banks in the names of children who have lost their parents due to COVID-19.
- The conduct of semester examinations in universities and colleges is postponed to the beginning of the next academic year, as and when the institutions reopen. Private colleges and schools were also instructed to not compel students/parents to pay pending dues for 2019-20 or advance fees for 2020-21

## **Travel and Movement**

- On March 15, the government notified a series of instructions that restricted the movement of people in the state. These include (i) shutting down of establishments, such as, educational institutions (up to Class 5), theatres, malls etc, and (ii) banning of inter-state travel for 15 days, anganwadis and making alternate provision of dry ration for children at their homes, swimming pools, amusement parks, gyms, zoos, museums, bars, clubs etc, and all educational institutions, except the conduct of practical exams for class 10 and 12, and various entrance exams.
- State borders were sealed off for road traffic, except for movement of essential commodities to tackle Pandemic.
- Public transportation services, such as metro rail and inter-state private buses, were also suspended till the situation normalizes.
- In view of rising number of cases stringent curfew orders were passed in several districts to restrict movement of people which has greatly reduced the number of cases.

## **Welfare Measures**

- TNSG government announced financial assistance of a total of Rs 60 crore to various departments, such as, health, transport etc, to take precautionary measures to combat COVID-19.
- TNSG announced the distribution of cash support of Rs 1,000 to all entitled family cardholders. Further, they were also eligible for free supply of essential commodities such as rice, dal, sugar, etc, during the month of April, through the Public Distribution System (PDS). The entire cost worked out to Rs.2187.00 crores.
- The government announced a cash assistance of Rs 1,500 per month to be credited into the bank accounts of differently-abled persons. It also announced that transgenders without ration cards, were eligible to receive 12kg of rice, 1kg of dal, and 1 litre of cooking oil, from fair price shops (FPS).
- The government announced a concession package to manufacturers of COVID-19 related medical equipment, who will commence production before July 31, 2020. The package applied to both MSMEs and large manufacturers of equipment, such as, ventilators, Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) kits and medicines. Some of the concessions include: (i) 30% capital subsidy, upto Rs 20 crore, (ii) 100% stamp duty waiver, (iii) 6% interest subvention for capital loans for two quarters, (iv) commencement of manufacturing without prior approval, and (v) provision of necessary land on priority basis for short-term/long-term leases, etc.
- Rs 50 lakh grant was announced to the families of frontline workers in the event of their unfortunate demise. If infected by COVID-19, they are eligible for Rs 2 lakh assistance towards treatment costs. In certain cases, if eligible, their kin would also receive a government job offer.
- TNSG announced that an amount of Rs 4000 will again be given to all ration cardholders of Tamil Nadu along with 15 kg of rice.