

## **Assam Community Surveillance Plan (ACSP): A unique initiative to strengthen active surveillance at the community level during COVID pandemic:**

### **Introduction:**

The state of Assam has been successfully managing the COVID-19 pandemic. The total COVID cases in Assam till 17.05.2020 was only 100, since the reporting of the 1<sup>st</sup> case on 31.03.2020, which is the testimony of the fact, but the number increased with the opening of the lockdown since 18.05.2020. The phase wise lockdown, as announced by Government of India is also proved as a boon for Assam. The lockdown period was optimally utilized to have more COVID hospitals functional, training of the HR engaged in COVID, ensuring uninterrupted supply of logistics required for COVID. The readiness, what state could take since beginning of the pandemic has given a strong confidence that state will be able to beat the COVID onslaught successfully.

### **Rationale of the Assam Community Surveillance Plan (ACSP):**

It is proved beyond doubt that the key to effective management of COVID-19 lies in doing adequate number of “**TESTING**”, “**TRACING**” and “**TREATING**”. Government of Assam took a policy decision to ensure “**RUTHLESS QUARANTINE WITH A HUMANE HEART**” for everyone, who enters Assam during post lockdown. Before putting someone at quarantine centre for 14 days, s/he undergoes COVID test. The test report only determines whether to release him/her for strict home quarantine (if test result is negative) for the residual number of days out of the total quarantine period of 14 days or to admit him/her at COVID Hospital (if test result is positive). This policy has been paying heavy dividend, as it has been seen that more than 90% of the total cases of the state as on 15.06.2020 are from different quarantine centres of Assam. Because maximum cases are coming from quarantine centres, so the COVID is hardly getting any chance to enter among community members.

However, to further strengthen the COVID response mechanism, state decided to have active surveillance in the name of “**Assam Community Surveillance Plan (ACSP)**” to look for SARI (Severe Acute Respiratory Infections) and ILI (Influenza like Illness) and fever cases covering all the 28000 villages / wards of Assam from 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2020. By making door to door visits, the potential cases of different diseases are listed out to test them (wherever necessary) and to take follow up actions, as per the test report. This opportunity of door to door visit is being used to look for any other diseases, like malaria, dengue, diarrhea etc. State has already completed 1<sup>st</sup> round of ACSP and based on the encouraging result of 1<sup>st</sup> round, Assam started the 2<sup>nd</sup> round of ACSP from 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 covering all villages and wards of Assam.

### **Methodology of the interventions under ACSP:**

The Assam Community Surveillance Plan is based on the Health Sub Centres in all districts of Assam and the role of ASHA is considered too critical in rolling out the activity, as she is the one, who makes door to door visit and looks for potential cases and to list them. Once, ASHA does the listing of all potential cases by making house to house visit of her area, the medical team, comprising Medical Officer (as leader of the team), ANM, MPW, Lab Tech visits the ASHA village and meet those listed potential cases (as per ASHA list) and screen them. Based on the advice of the Medical Officer, the Lab Tech collects swab, blood (as the

case may be) and sample is transported to the designated lab for testing. All the members of the medical team take all the precautions, as per the laid down protocols. For few cases (based on the nature of complaint of the person), Medical Officer only gives advice without prescribing any test. Based on the test report, treatment is given to the patient.

During the visit of the medical team, they also interact with the patient, family members and tell them about DOs and DON'Ts of COVID-19, need for using mask, social distancing, hand washing, isolation etc. and also give them mask. Using of local mask is also encouraged. Suspected persons are advised for strict home quarantine till the test report is made available to him/her. Help from the community members is also sought in reaching to each and every household so that no potential case is missed out from testing.

### **Result of the 1<sup>st</sup> round of ACSP:**

The rigorous active surveillance has made community aware about this innovative plan and also about COVID-19 and its DOs and DON'Ts. The potential cases of different diseases, which are found during surveillance have been tested and is being treated. Only, 1 case of COVID was found in the state from West Karbi Anglong district through ACSP. Moreover, the cases of malaria, JE, who were identified have been given treatment, which helped them to get cured early. The performances of the 1<sup>st</sup> round of ACSP is shown below.

<b>Status of Assam Community Surveillance Plan (ACSP): 1st Round</b>		
<b>Sl No</b>	<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Performance - Assam (up to 12th June 2020)</b>
1	<b>Number of ASHA Villages covered</b>	<b>33,114</b>
2	<b>No of persons screened</b>	<b>13,03,173</b>
3	<b>Number of persons with Fever</b>	<b>28,928</b>
4	<b>Number of SARI Patients</b>	<b>248</b>
5	<b>Number of ILI Patients</b>	<b>6,424</b>
6	<b>No of samples collected for COVID-19</b>	<b>4,535</b>
7	<b>No of RDK Test for Malaria</b>	<b>26,148</b>
10	<b>No of Blood Slide collected for Malaria</b>	<b>24,007</b>
11	<b>No of Samples collected for JE</b>	<b>8</b>
12	<b>No of persons referred for Home Quarantine</b>	<b>9,554</b>

### **Scaling up of the initiative:**

Based on the encouraging result of the 1<sup>st</sup> round of ACSP, Assam decided to go for 2<sup>nd</sup> round of ACSP from 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 in all villages/wards. Since, many people have been coming from other states and going to different villages (following quarantine norms), so active surveillance will definitely help to get an alert in advance about if anyone develops any sign and symptoms of COVID-19. Getting timely information will help health service providers to take on time action to avoid community spread of COVID-19. With the onset of monsoon, many other diseases will erupt, but active surveillance will help to keep those diseases under control. All these actions in totality will ensure better health of people, less out of pocket expenditure in this crisis, which will strengthen the bondage between citizens and Government.

**Action Photos:**



Figure 1: Community Health Workers are crossing all odds to reach to last mile

**Field level actions under Assam Community Surveillance Program (ACSP):**



**Assam Community Surveillance Program**

