To

Shri Narendra Modi
Hon’ble Prime Minister of India

South Block, Raisina Hill

New Delhi 110011

25 March 2020


Hon’ble Prime Minister,

We, public health practitioners, medical professionals write to you with regard to the plight of the people in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh in the current context of COVID-19.

According to reports, health professionals are unable to or delayed in accessing the important guidelines and updates on not just the prevalence of COVID-19, but also on the latest guidelines and breakthroughs issued by the Government of India, the World Health Organisation (WHO) regarding testing and treatment for people suspected of being exposed to the virus or who are infected with the virus. The very slow internet speed due to 2G services veritably makes access to data, which is extremely urgent in such a situation, nearly impossible.

There are also reports that people are unable to share medical reports nor make video calls to health professionals to seek advice for their health issues. In the current COVID – 19 context, emotional and mental health support are very critical especially in a situation of physical distancing; communications are fundamental to stay in touch with families, friends as well as other support services that are necessary for people’s health and well-being. Moreover, Health professionals who require regular supplies of protective equipment and gear are unable to access the same in time.

In 2016, the Human Rights Council of the United Nations General Assembly, declared access to internet to be a basic human right, and as integral for individuals to exercise their rights. Slow speed internet such as 2G services do not allow access to most sites, prevents people from accessing vital and important health information, especially with regard to prevention and treatment of COVID-19. Internet with a good speed is also essential today; a lot of information is shared through the
internet, and substantial work, application to health schemes, most payments, taxes, etc., which have been digitized by the government and cannot be carried out without internet with a good speed. The intermittent access to internet or it’s slow speed due to 2G services in Jammu and Kashmir as well as Ladakh will aggravate the public health crisis.

The rights of the people, including health professionals, to universal access to information, protective equipment, medicines, testing kits, as well as other support services for their well-being must be fulfilled.

We urge you to urgently consider restoration of 4G internet services in Jammu and Kashmir as well as Ladakh with immediate effect.

Endorsed by

1. Jan Swasthya Abhiyan
2. Medico Friend Circle
3. Sarojini N, Jan Swasthya Abhiyan
4. Dr Amar Jesani, Medico Friend Circle, Mumbai
5. Dr Yogesh Jain, Medico Friend Circle
6. Dr T Sundararaman, Jan Swasthya Abhiyan
7. Veena Johari, Mumbai
8. Deepa V. Medico Friend Circle
9. Sulakshana Nandi, Jan Swasthya Abhiyan
10. Uma Chakravarti
11. Vasanth Kannabiran
12. Devaki Jain
13. Prabir Chatterjee, Kolkata
14. Ramani Atkuri
15. Sagari Ramdas
16. Kalpana Kannabiran
17. Aruna Burte
18. Ketaki Chowkhani
19. Deeptha Achar
20. Ratnaboli Ray, Kolkata
21. Suneeta Dhar, Activist
22. Nandini Sundar, Delhi University
23. Aisha K. Gill, Professor of Criminology, University of Rochampton, UK
24. Vasundhara, Physician
25. Gabriela Dietrich
26. Radhika Khajuria
27. Roshmi Goswami
28. Ujwala Kadrekar
29. Pallavi Gupta, Researcher
30. Dr. Mohan Rao, Former Professor, Centre for Social Medicine and Community Health, JNU
31. Ayesha Kidwai
32. Sadhna Arya, DU
33. Madhoo N
34. Vibhuti Patel
35. Jhelum Roy
36. Dyuti
37. Madhurima Nundy
38. Arundhati Dhuru, NAPM
39. Sandeep Pandey, Socialist Party of India
40. Lara Jesani, Mumbai
41. Sharmila Sreekumar
42. Gayatri Sharma
43. Abha Bhaiya
44. Vanita Mukherjee
45. LABIA, A queer feminist LBT collective, Mumbai
46. Chayanika Shah, Queer activist, Mumbai
47. Nandini Rao
48. Arunima G., JNU
49. Pamela Philipose, Journalist, New Delhi
50. Dewal Sawarkar
51. Rohit Shah, IIT Mumbai
52. Karuna D. W., Chennai
53. Sujata Patel
54. Sheeba Chhachhi
55. Prabhleen Tuteja
56. Jagdish Patel, Vadodara
57. Anuradha Kapoor, Kolkata
58. Sumi Krishna, Bengaluru
59. K. Saradamoni, Trivandrum
60. Malini Ghose
61. Rupsa Mallik
62. Sandhya Srinivasan
63. Srivats
64. Asha G, Trivandrum
65. Jashodhara Dasgupta
66. Abhiti Gupta
67. Govind Kelkar
68. Disha Mullick
69. Enakshi Ganguly, Activist
70. Bebaak Collective
71. Vani Subramanian
72. Saheli, Delhi
73. Neeta Hardikar, Gujarat
74. Kaaren Mathias
75. Rita Manchanda

Contact: 919818664634, 9871642320