

To,
The Chief Minister
Manipur Civil Secretariat
Imphal, Manipur- 795010

Sir,

We hope this letter finds you well. Our state is suffering due to the pandemic, something which was unprecedented and unanticipated for. Addressing this grievous situation, we write to you in hope that we can affect change as the youth of Manipur who belong to different independent organizations to fight the pandemic successfully. To make our home a safer place, we have been working to help the patients get hospital beds, medicines and oxygen cylinders in time by coordinating with the concerned authorities at pharmacies, hospitals and health centers. We have taken notice of your recent contribution in fighting the pandemic and we would like to express our sincere gratitude for such soulful work. Today, we would like to bring your notice to some measures we think are imperative and extremely necessary that we could take up in order to curb the spread of the virus and also to curb the number of deaths occurring in the state. Thus below, we have listed a few recommendations and sincerely request you to kindly consider them:

1. Vaccination sites:

We request the government to make arrangements for vaccination sites to be located in open spaces wherever possible instead of closed rooms and buildings of hospitals and health centers. We also request the government to increase vaccination sites by utilizing local volunteers in localities so that we can prevent overcrowding and speed up the vaccination drive. There are many reports of people getting infected while coming for vaccination and thus, due to the fear of infection at vaccination sites, many are discouraged to get vaccinated. Following the “Three C’s” that is to be avoided, given by the WHO i.e. 1) Crowded places, 2) Close-contact settings 3) Confined and enclosed spaces with poor ventilations, it is clear that the chances of getting infected in the outdoor settings to the chances of getting infected in the indoor settings is very low. Thus locating Vaccination sites at the outdoors will benefit us in three ways:

a) It will reduce the chances of people getting infected by the virus at vaccination centers.

- b) It will also provide more space for more patients to be admitted to the hospitals as the spaces previously used for vaccination can be utilized for admitting patients.
- c) It will encourage more people to come for vaccination.

2. Setting up Temporary/Field hospitals:

The number of **Covid-19** positive cases in the state is increasing at an alarming rate along with the number of deaths from the virus increasing steadily. We at any cost do not want to face what other states and territories such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Delhi, Maharashtra (to mention a few) are facing. Some experts are also predicting the North-eastern region of the country to be the next hotspot for the **Covid-19** crisis. In view of the future that is going to unfold, it is an urgent need of the hour that we take up necessary steps to prevent such misfortune from unfolding. Thus, setting up of temporary hospitals by utilizing hostels, rents and boarding schools which remain unused due to the pandemic would be a welcome step. This will benefit us in two ways:

- a) There will be more beds for patients in need and will get the necessary treatments done in time, thus preventing more deaths.
- b) There are many non-covid patients suffering from other comorbidities who need regular checkup and treatments. Segregating covid and non-covid patients not just in terms of wards and buildings in the same hospitals but in different hospitals and health centers will help save more lives. As most of the time, it is people with other comorbidities who are getting severely affected by the virus, ensuring tighter security from the virus (with the virus being declared as airborne) is extremely necessary in hospitals where such patients come for regular treatments. Thus, setting up temporary hospitals now, will help address near future crises.

3. Increase the number of ICU beds, Oxygen Supply and Ventilators:

The most serious grievances many patients are facing right now is the non-availability of ICU beds, shortage of oxygen supply and ventilators. We have come across many lives lost to covid-19 that could have been saved had there been enough ICU beds and ventilators. Shortage of oxygen cylinders is also a grievous concern. Our ground analysis suggest that patient's health often deteriorates while waiting for oxygen supplies specifically the ones in the home isolation. Therefore, kindly procure and provide more ICU beds, oxygen cylinders and ventilators to the hospitals at the earliest. Furthermore, we would request a regular inspection of the available ICU beds as well and installation of Ventilators which are in stock as soon as possible.

4. Bringing in the Reserved Police Forces:

As we are witnessing that there is a lack of human resources in fighting the pandemic, we consider that recruiting Reserved Police forces will be of great help. The United States despite having a surge of COVID cases were able to curb the virus down in a short time because they used US military to execute their plans. We understand using the Armed Forces in our state would welcome several criticisms, which is why we suggest the use of Reserved Police Forces to deal with the pandemic effectively in a shorter time. For instance, they can either set up field hospitals for COVID treatments or for vaccinations to effectively fight the pandemic. We should understand that we are facing a humanitarian battle against the virus. Thus, recruiting people who are already well trained and equipped in dealing with such situations, would be of great help.

5. Capping Hospital fees and other medical requirements:

Following the striction issued by the Kerala High Court, the Kerala Government has already imposed an order to cap the fees of Private Hospitals like bed charges, ICU charges, etc. and laid price restrictions on necessary medicines. Taking the Kerala model as an example, it would be great if the Manipur Government imposes price caps on private hospitals and other medical requirements like oxygen cylinders specially the ones used in home isolation. The poverty rate in Manipur is pretty high and not everyone can afford the fees charged by private hospitals and private enterprises supplying medical equipment. With the Government Hospitals leaving no empty beds, people have to rely on private hospitals which can cost a fortune. The government considering such dire situations, must cap the Private Hospital fees and other medical resources like prices of medicines, price rate of oxygen cylinders by private enterprises, RTPCR testing (Making It Readily Accessible to The Public) etc.

The unavailability of ambulance services in time is also one of the main concerns. Many a times, due to the unavailability of easy access to such services, people have to depend on private services which charge exorbitant rates. Manipur, being a state with a high poverty rate, not many have the luxury to own or arrange a private vehicle, due to which, people coming to hospitals for treatment specially coming from other places besides Imphal are having to pay heavy prices which is not called for. Thus, we urge you to kindly look into this matter.

6. Aid for People with Disabilities:

People with disabilities often have to rely on their caretakers and their family members. However, if their caretakers or kin are affected by **COVID-19** they become helpless and will not be able to perform their ordinary avocations or even go to vaccination centers per se. Such situation calls for special action by the government to help the people with disabilities whose caretaker or family members are affected by the virus. For instance, the Government can introduce a helpline specially for the people with disabilities.

7. 24×7 Helpdesk for all hospitals

The government must make sure that all the government hospitals: **RIMS, JNIMS and District Hospitals** have a helpline that functions 24×7 so that the patient and/or their attendants can reach out to them and inquire about bed availability and other facilities easily instead of wasting precious time going to and from their home, hospitals and covid care centers. It has also come to our notice that the covid control rooms don't have updated contact numbers of government hospitals.

The above mentioned were the few things we considered urgent and would like to bring to your kind notice. Lastly, our team would like to thank you Sir, our honorable **CM Nongthombam Biren Singh**, for being an efficient and capable leader for whom the security of his people stands as the top priority. We deeply appreciate how you nobly stood by the people's side and rescued many of us by bringing us back home when we were faced with threats of racism in other parts of the country last year. We also take this opportunity to express our immense gratitude once again to our front-liners for all the sacrifices made. We have immense faith in you and we will co-operate in any way possible as citizens in all the good measures you take up to stand in solidarity and fight the virus.

Yours Sincerely,

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Girl Up Khonjel

Girl Up Manipur

Go Green Group

Mingsel Foundation

Paomi Post

Ya_All Northeast