

REPORT BACK ON THE WEBINAR

ROLE OF DRE IN STRENGTHENING THE PUBLIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE IN JHARKHAND IN POST COVID-19 SCENARIO

Date : May 26, 2020

KEY NOTES FROM THE MODERATOR



Mr. Ramapati Kumar, CEO, CEED India Development

- ◆ Highlighted pressing issues and hardship people are facing by Covid-19 epidemic that has unleashed a humanitarian & economic crisis
- ◆ Put forth the effects of reverse migration and simultaneous increase in the positive cases in Jharkhand, where unemployment and drudgery are creating additional pressure
- ◆ Elaborated the problems like e.g. unreliable and irregular supply of power in public health institutions, and suggested that it can be offset by massive uptake of DRE solutions
- ◆ Emphasised on the Decentralised model of health infrastructure for suitably addressing Corona crisis at the local level/source itself
- ◆ Strongly suggested that electricity must be prioritised right from the planning phase
- ◆ Mainstreaming clean sources energy is of prime importance, so Health Department should take pro-active approach and show leadership to take it forward

KEY NOTES FROM THE SPEAKERS



Dr. Suranjeen Prasad , Associate Director, JHPIEGO

- ◆ Highlighted that health centres, especially at far flung areas, are badly affected due to lockdown and are facing a lot of logistics issues
- ◆ Elaborated the after-effects of lockdown on health sector e.g. delay in routine immunisation, interruption in health services, and lack of necessary equipments
- ◆ Referred to a government data which says that only 42% of health centres were electrified, and majority of centres face unreliable and inadequate supply of power
- ◆ Highlighted the importance of power for not only being needed for lighting purpose, but also for access to water supply for sanitisation, drinking, cleaning, and surgical purposes
- ◆ Laid focus on the importance of changing the perception and mindset of the bureaucrats and health professionals on the use of renewables which is deep-rooted due to previous experience of such applications
- ◆ Emphasised that for strengthening the health centres, one of the prerequisite must be supply of reliable and adequate power, and here comes the role of DRE solutions



Col. Vijay Bhaskar, Country Director, MLINDA

- ◆ Shared his recent experiences on how the district administration realised the importance of DRE and gave permission to operate them as an essential sector for electrifying health centres, government offices and nearby villages, and lend in support in providing basic healthcare services
- ◆ Highlighted how the behavioural changes in the people occurred, and the people prioritised on stocking of essential supplies over electricity in the earlier phase of lockdown, however the consumption of electricity even showed growth by 10-15%
- ◆ Explained the importance of constant supply of electricity to refrigerate the medicines, vaccines, samples, along with powering the body warmer for the new borns, and also for smooth functioning of the patient wards for basic/emergency needs
- ◆ Emphasised how DRE/Mini Grids won hearts of many people by supplying regular electricity, even when consistent power from the grid failed (due to low demand as a result of closure of industries)
- ◆ Elaborated that DRE can change the rural enterprises through array of activities
- ◆ Highlighted the positivities of supplying quality and reliable electricity from DRE solutions (like mini grids) which will result in more medics rendering services properly



Ms. Pamli Deka, Associate Director (Energy), WRI India

- ◆ Suggested the need to have capacity building of the stakeholders e.g. primary beneficiaries, medical communities etc. at larger level to address the issue of acute/chronic electricity problems in the rural hinterland
- ◆ Highlighted the need to collaborate with the Health Department on priority basis before taking up electrification of any health centres for breaking the departmental silos
- ◆ Emphasised the need to have an integrated approach of the Data, Technology & Finance so that concrete change can be brought in to policy terms at State/National level
- ◆ Shared the case story of Navjivan Hospital in Palamu, where a small system of 10 kWp is powering the ventilators as well other essential medical equipments, which otherwise was difficult due to regular disruption of 6-8 hrs of electricity.
- ◆ Advocated to share the experiences and success models of DRE to the State/Central governments for its wider acceptance as a solution provider

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE WEBINAR

- ◆ Mainstreaming electricity should be primary concern at the planning phase itself
- ◆ Decentralised health infrastructure powered through DRE solutions can change the tenor of fight against the Covid-19 pandemic at the source itself
- ◆ Consistent supply of quality power is essential for providing general lighting needs and also emergency services like powering medical equipments; and in this context DRE is suitable with its localised power production and distribution abilities
- ◆ Issue sensitisation of the medical practitioners, government and people at large in favour of renewable applications is important for wider adoption and promotion of DRE
- ◆ The DRE can create direct and indirect jobs, and further provide reliable electricity support to local businesses and enterprises
- ◆ Consistent and quality electricity supply to health centres can motivate medical professionals rendering their services diligently without much glitches
- ◆ A dedicated policy is urgently needed to scale up the use of DRE through an integrated approach in strengthening the public health sector





CONCLUSION

The DRE indeed can be a game changer in strengthening the public health infrastructure especially in rural areas for providing better services to the society and rendering support in limiting the spread of viruses like Covid-19. The DRE has the potential to electrify the overall health value chain in the state and subsequently play an important role in decreasing the mortality rate in Jharkhand. The DRE can also help in addressing the unemployment issue arisen due the reverse migration taking place, and it become a solution to generate some employment at the local level and support local business and enterprises. Thus, DRE has multiple roles ranging from strengthening the health infrastructure, reviving the rural economy to improving the health of the people in a big way.

DRE IS NOT ONLY A SOLUTION BUT ALSO A SERVICE TO THE SOCIETY

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