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*The Government of India steered COVID response efforts on a “mission mode”. **Jan Andolan** – a mass campaign launched by India’s Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, placed enhanced focus on making India’s response a “People or Community-led movement”. His clarion call imbued every Indian to face the pandemic head-on.*

The first story is of young volunteers who realized that if their community had to be saved from the pandemic, they would have to generate greater awareness among the community. Racing against time, these volunteers thought of unique ways to articulate the importance of the COVID-19 vaccination.



Harshali Purohit, a young volunteer under the Government of India's Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (National Adolescent Health Programme) along with her team take upon themselves to root out misinformation on COVID vaccination and to address the deeply entrenched vaccine hesitancy in their village.



Harshali is a resident of Narsingh Runda, a village in the State of Madhya Pradesh.

Even as the largest vaccination drive gained pace across the country, there was no time to lose. Harshali and her colleagues had a challenging task to accomplish if their community had to be kept safe from COVID-19. The team decided to go door-to-door and talk to each resident of the community to address their apprehensions regarding vaccination.



Harshali and her young brigade seek every opportunity to meet members of the community. Here, her colleague and she are seen acquainting one such member on the necessity to observe COVID appropriate behaviour to keep safe, viz wearing a mask, maintaining physical distance and regularly sanitizing hands.



“We had to convince people in ways they understood”, said Harshali.

“So we adopted a customary tradition practised to invite community members to weddings in which a mixture of rice and turmeric is placed at the door of the guest. Instead, we placed the mixture of rice and turmeric at the door of eligible beneficiaries as an invitation to come for COVID-19 vaccination”, said Harshali.



“People were pleasantly piqued and they agreed to come for the vaccination”, said Harshali.



Today, Harshali and her team have successfully managed to convince most of the eligible members to take the COVID-19 vaccination.



It is because of such untiring efforts of Harshali and her team that the villagers turned up in large numbers at the awareness meets, to learn more about the disease, the vaccination and other preventive measures.



“I feel proud that I could also do something for my village”, said Harshali beaming with joy.