NGOs and volunteers to work in coordination with government to prevent COVID-19

Onkar Chand Sharma, Principal Secretary, Revenue-Disaster Management, said here today that the numbers of people infected with Coronavirus were increasing. Therefore it has become necessary that Government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to work with mutual coordination to control this pandemic.

He said that Disaster Management Act 2005 mandates every state government, State Disaster Management Authority and District Disaster Management Authority for collaboration with stake holder agencies including NGOs for the purpose of improving the effectiveness of disaster management. The Act mandates NGOs to act in an equitable and non-discriminatory manner for the purpose of assisting or protecting the disaster affected communities or for providing relief.

He said that the Himachal Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority was endeavouring to ensure the role of Non-Governmental Organizations and volunteers in the prevention of coronavirus pandemic and related activities. In this direction, the authority has suggested to activate the inter-agency group constituted at the state and district levels. Besides, appointing an official for coordination with all the Non-Governmental Organizations at the district level and the inter-agency of each district. The convenor of the group has been requested to work in coordination with District Disaster Management Authority.

He said that the State Inter-Agency Group was reconstituted in the year 2018, under which 55 Non-Governmental Organisations have been registered so far and every district in the state has its own Inter-Agency Group, convenor, core group and members. The purpose of this agency is to pre-preparedness, relief, rescue and rehabilitation activities in coordination with the state government and district administration.

He said that Non-Governmental Organizations have started campaigns to spread awareness and to provide assistance to ultra-sensitive persons in some districts. The State Disaster Management Authority has taken the initiative to register volunteers to tackle COVID-19 in the state. He said that more than 950 Himachali citizens were ready to provide their voluntary service in this database.

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