



NITI Aayog

# NITI Aayog Launches Behaviour Change Campaign, 'Navigating the New Normal', and Website (Essential focus on mask-wearing by all)

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NITI Aayog, in partnership with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Centre for Social and Behavioural Change (CSBC), Ashoka University, and the Ministries of Health and WCD, today launched a behaviour change campaign called 'Navigating the New Normal', and its website.

Focusing on Covid-safe behaviours, especially wearing masks, during the 'Unlock' phase of the ongoing pandemic, the campaign was launched in the presence of NITI Aayog Member Dr V.K. Paul, CEO Amitabh Kant, Principal Scientific Adviser Prof. K. Vijayraghavan, BMGF Country Director Hari Menon, noted lyricist and CEO and CCO of McCann Worldgroup India Prasoon Joshi. Senior officials of NITI Aayog, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and BMGF were also present. As many as 92,000 NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs) working with NITI Aayog too participated in the virtual launch, which was done via a webcast.

Developed under the guidance of Empowered Group 6, constituted by the Government of India and chaired by CEO, NITI Aayog, the campaign has two parts. The first is a web portal,



<http://www.covidthenewnormal.com/>, containing resources informed by behavioural science and the use of nudge and social norms theory, related to Covid-safe behavioural norms during the ongoing Unlock phase, and the second is a media campaign focused on the wearing of masks.

In his opening address, NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said, 'As India unlocks, one key worry is how do we encourage the public and institutions to practise Covid-safe behaviours. Until a vaccine is available, wearing masks along with practising hand hygiene and social distancing, will be important to slow down the spread of the novel coronavirus.'

‘Empowered Group 6 and Ministry of Health wanted that we give a nudge towards desired social behaviour in which the enforcement burden shifts from the Government to the citizens. NITI Aayog, in partnership with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Centre for Social and Behavioural Change, has made an effort to provide people with prompts and reminders along with simple, easy-to-

practice ideas of designing their environment in such a manner that practising these behaviours become easy.’

NITI Aayog Member Dr V.K. Paul emphasized that our future is dependent not on the virus but our behaviours. ‘If we create distance, wear masks, or use a barrier like a vaccine, the virus can’t spread. We are fighting this war with the ingenuity of humanity. In an ideal world, if we create and fortify these Covid-safe behaviours, the virus will not be able to spread. Special areas of concern are small factories and poor labourers, who comprise a large part of our vulnerable population, and where and to whom these messages must penetrate and reach. We hope as we build this campaign that there will be many other strands; that this will not just be a ripple or a wave, but a tsunami of behaviour change.’

Principal Scientific Adviser K. Vijayraghavan lauded the initiative and said the disease will spread in an unmitigated manner unless we effectively increase distancing. MoHFW Officer on Special Duty Rajesh Bhushan expressed the Ministry’s full support for the campaign.

Hari Menon, India Country Director, BMGF, said, ‘We are committed to our partnership with the Government of India and NITI Aayog to support the national Covid-19 response. We are honoured to work together with the Government on this novel initiative that puts behavioural science into practice, in an easy and simple manner, to encourage Covid-19 preventive behaviours. I am hopeful that “Navigating the New Normal” campaign will help normalize protective behaviours, especially mask-wearing.’



McCann Worldgroup India CEO and CCO Praseon Joshi said, ‘We have a lot of challenges during this phase. We must keep reinforcing Covid-appropriate behaviours till they become a part of our daily routine. Our effort is to nudge the public to adopt the practise of wearing masks. As a society we will have to accept the need of wearing masks, we have to embrace it and reflect it in our behaviour.’

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbaSzQQ9q5s&feature=youtu.be)

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### About the Campaign:

## **The Website**

Developed in consultation with MoHFW and other stakeholders, the website aims to increase public participation and engage CSOs and NGOs. It will become a repository of strategies and collaterals to practise Covid-safe behaviours in different sectors. It aims to provide open-source access to anyone, including CSOs, NGOs, the public, institutions, *anganwadi* workers and district administration. With the availability of this information, institutions and civil society organisations can plan to resume their normal activities while practising Covid-safe behaviours.

The portal focuses on easy implementation of four key behaviours in the unlock phase:

- 1. mask-wearing**
- 2. socialdistancing**
- 3. handhygiene**
- 4. not spitting in public**

The website will have sector-specific collaterals and guidelines for health, nutrition, and public transport (in metro cities).

## **A Focused Mask-Wearing Campaign**

Media will be utilised in establishing the correct way to wear masks. Undoubtedly, this simple measure has made a big difference in the fight against Covid-19. Countries such as Japan and South Korea have made 'mask-wearing' a socially accepted norm. The mask-wearing campaign is designed by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in partnership with McCann Worldgroup.

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VRRK/KP

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