

Date: 24th November 2020

To,

Shri. Narendra Modi Ji
Hon. Prime Minister
Government of India

Subject: Minister of State for Public Health & Digital Health

Respected Sir,

Warm Greetings!

I am writing this on behalf of the Health Parliament, which is amongst the World's few Think-Tanks that work on evidence-based policymaking and reforms.

Considering the healthcare scenario in India due to COVID-19, it is high time we have a dedicated technologist for public health. The data from countries like Vietnam & Taiwan have shown how the ***use of technology, careful planning, and pre-emptive action*** helped these countries 'close' to China handle the COVID-19 pandemic; else, COVID-19 would have swamped these countries.

- ***Vietnam has 1450 kms of land border with China, and in Taiwan, about 8,50,000 people work in mainland China.***
- Taiwan, with a total population of about 2.38 crores, had just 07 deaths to date with 716 COVID-19 cases.
- Vietnam with a population of about 9.7 crores, had just 1335 cases and 13 deaths.

The COVID-19 vaccine is in the trial stage. It is important to work on a plan on; how it will reach people, how we identify who will be prioritised, when and how it will reach, and most importantly, track the storage conditions and track and trace for the spurious and fake vaccine. God forbid, should the vaccine lead to adverse events, how do we handle patients and recall the vaccine? All such questions can be addressed by using technology across the value chain. Just think for a while, if those who had COVID-19 start having symptoms months or years later, how do we co-relate, track, trace, and treat them? Certainly, nothing can be ruled out if this is a 'programmed virus'!! So, digital tools will be needed to address such issues at the planning stage.

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Given the experience of the past six months, the team at the MOHFW is certainly not matching your vision and scale, and the evidence is mounting. Given the success of the Aarogya Setu, and the launch of the National Digital Health Mission, If India needs to establish global leadership in Digital Health, it will need to have a dedicated Minister for Digital Health.

The UAE has a dedicated minister for AI. India should be the 1st country to have a dedicated, well-experienced technologist as the Minister of State for Public Health & Digital Health.

The world is transforming entirely into a digital society, and we will need to be prepared to face such situations and set a new benchmark for the world. Therefore, a highly qualified, dedicated person is required for Public Health & Digital Health.

At Health Parliament, we will shortly release a report on the impact of COVID-19 on the Mental Wellbeing of Students, and considering the findings of this study, we are convinced that **India will need a dedicated Minister of State for Public Health & Digital Health.**

We at Health Parliament do our primary research to support the work in public policy formulation.

We do hope that you will take our suggestion seriously and consider our request in the nation's interest before the situation goes out of control.

We believe, that this step will lead us to a better and healthier country, as a dedicated minister will look into the implementation of policies at ground-level for Public Health & Digital Health.

We remain at your disposal for any details or clarification on this submission.

Yours sincerely,



Ms. Mevish P Vaishnav

On behalf of

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