

Government of India
Ministry of Culture

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**SOPs for Cultural Functions & Programs on preventive measures to contain
spread of COVID-19**

1. Background

To facilitate and encourage cultural performances during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to instill confidence in audience to attend programs without fear of contradicting the disease, it is imperative that all stakeholders associated with implementing cultural functions and programs across the country should adopt strict measures to prevent further transmission of COVID-19, while conducting their operations and activities.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This document outlines the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) containing clear guidance for cultural institutions to conduct safe operations and prevent the spread of COVID-19 during cultural functions and programs. These Standard Operating Procedures are to be followed by the management of theatres & performance spaces (host institutions), as well as the entertainment/creative agencies, artists, crew or any other persons who hire the auditoria or any other open/closed cultural spaces for cultural programs or functions, whether on payment or *gratis*.
- 2.2 No cultural activities shall be permitted inside containment zones.
- 2.3 States/UTs may consider proposing additional measures as per their field assessment.

3. SOPs related to Cultural Functions & Programs

3.1 General Guidelines

Following basic principles can help prevent the spread of the disease. These measures need to be observed by all employees and visitors at all times.

These include:

- i. Adequate physical distancing of at least 6 feet to be followed at all times.
- ii. Use of face covers/masks to be made mandatory at all times.
- iii. Sanitization of venue before and after the event.
- iv. Availability of hand sanitizers, preferably in the touch-free mode, at entry and exit points as well as common areas within the premises.
- v. Adequate dustbins must be provided at key points, with specially marked dustbins for proper disposal of masks, gloves or other equipment, especially those used by cleaning staff.
- vi. Respiratory etiquettes to be strictly followed. This involves strict practice of covering one's mouth and nose while coughing/sneezing with a tissue/handkerchief/flexed elbow and disposing off used tissues properly.
- vii. Self-monitoring of health by all and reporting any illness at the earliest to state and district helpline.
- viii. Spitting shall be strictly prohibited.
- ix. Installation & use of *Aarogya Setu* App shall be advised to all visitors /staff/artists/crew and others having compatible mobile phones.
- x. In case of a suspect or confirmed case in the premises :
 - a. Place the ill person in a room or area where they are isolated from others.
 - b. Provide a mask/face cover till such time he/she is examined by a doctor.
 - c. Immediately inform the nearest medical facility (hospital/clinic) or call the state or district helpline.
 - d. A risk assessment will be undertaken by the designated public health authority (district RRT/treating physician) and accordingly further action be initiated regarding management of case, his/her contacts and need for disinfection.
 - e. Thorough disinfection of the premises to be taken up if the person is found positive.

3.2 Guidelines for Staff Members

- i. Use of face covers/masks is essential for all staff members and adequate stock of such face covers should be made available by host institution. Staff must be trained to properly cover their noses and mouths at all times.
- ii. All staff members who are at higher risk, i.e., older employees, pregnant women, staff having any underlying medical conditions, to take extra precautions. They should not be exposed to any front-line work requiring direct contact with the public.

- iii. Communication and training of staff to understand basic details of COVID-19 including symptoms, complications, prevention of transmission shall be carried out on a regular basis.

3.3 Guidelines for Artists & Crew (event specific)

- i. It is advisable for all external artists and crew members, including those engaged in providing lighting, sound, make-up, costume etc. to present a valid COVID negative test result to relevant authorities at the host institution. The test should have been conducted within 7 days prior to the event. Management/creative agency may provide a mobile testing unit at the venue if feasible.
- ii. It is advised to keep use of props to the minimal and avoid procurement of any new equipment than already designated in the premises.
- iii. Production houses must ensure that minimum crew visits the premises.
- iv. It is advisable that trials and fittings related to costumes to be done at artist's residence. Nuances such as look test may be shared over video.
- v. Artists should wear masks at all times other than during actual performances and rehearsals.
- vi. Troupe Leaders/Crew Managers will ensure strict adherence to all COVID guidelines by Troupe Members during their transit and stay.

3.4 Guidelines for Green Rooms

- i. Green rooms to be kept uncluttered.
- ii. All artists shall be encouraged to prepare at least part of their get up (costume, hair style, make-up etc.) at their residence to ensure that minimal support is required in green rooms.
- iii. It is advised to maintain adequate physical distancing while using green rooms for costume changes and make-up.
- iv. Artists/staff present in the green room must ensure that interaction with each other is kept to minimal in order to avoid any exchange of breath.
- v. All green rooms must be thoroughly sanitized before after each usage.
- vi. Adequate stock of sanitizers must be provided in green rooms by management.
- vii. Toilets for artists must be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized by the management at regular intervals throughout the day.

3.5 Guidelines for Stage

- i. Adequate physical distancing is advisable on stage to the extent possible, especially during longer acts/musical/dance and other cultural performances.

- ii. Stage must be thoroughly sanitized before and after each usage.
- iii. Sets and properties in theatrical productions may be kept to minimum with few changes, to avoid movement and crowding on stage.
- iv. Artists must ensure sanitization of their own equipment such as musical instruments before entering the venue and also before the performances. Management must provide support for sanitization at venue.

3.6 Guidelines for Entry and Exit Points

- i. Strictly no entry without mask. Visitors, patrons & audience members must wear proper masks covering the nose and mouth at all times. Management should identify and check any visitors who flout this basic rule and in case of non-cooperation, they should ask the visitor /patron/audience member to leave the venue.
- ii. Thermal screening of all visitors/staff must be carried out at all entry points. Only asymptomatic individuals shall be allowed to enter the premises.
- iii. Provisions for hand sanitization must be made available at all entry points and in work areas.
- iv. Designated queue markers shall be made available for entry and exit of the audience from the auditorium and the premises.
- v. Audience should be made to exit in a staggered row-wise manner to avoid crowding at any point.

3.7 Guidelines for Providing Food and Beverages

- i. All artists and staff should be encouraged to carry food from home if possible, and to maintain physical distancing at eating points/cafeteria.
- ii. Packaged food may be provided to crew and artists who require meals.
- iii. Tables in cafeteria should not be crowded; adequate distance to be maintained between seats.
- iv. Use of disposable cutlery and crockery to be encouraged.
- v. Water dispenser, if any, should be used in such a manner as to avoid littering. Use of recyclable bottles should be encouraged.
- vi. Refreshments should be distributed by dedicated personnel in a planned manner in designated areas only, including in open-air venues, to avoid any interaction among the crowd.
- vii. Littering must not take place and should be strictly monitored.
- viii. No food and drink should be permitted inside the auditorium.

3.8 Guidelines for Bookings and Payments

- i. Digital no-contact transactions shall be the preferred mode for issue/verification/payments for tickets. All cultural institutions are encouraged to open purchase of tickets online for their events.
- ii. Contact details of all customers should be taken at the time of booking of tickets, to facilitate contact tracing.
- iii. The purchase of tickets at the box office should be open throughout the day and advance booking shall be allowed to avoid crowding at the sale counters.
- iv. Floor markers shall be used for physical distancing during queue management at the box office.
- v. Sale of tickets at box office/venue to be kept to bare minimum, to avoid human interaction.

3.9 Guidelines for Seating Arrangements

- i. The occupancy of auditoriums/closed performance spaces shall not be more than 50% of total seating capacity, subject to a ceiling of 200 persons.
- ii. Seating arrangement inside the auditorium/closed performance spaces to be made in such a way that adequate physical distancing is maintained. A model seating arrangement is attached at Annexure 1.
- iii. Seats that are “Not to be occupied” shall be marked as such during booking (for both online booking and box office sale of tickets).
- iv. The “Not to be occupied” seats inside auditoriums/performance spaces should either be taped or marked with fluorescent markers to prevent people from occupying these seats, so as to ensure adequate physical distancing at all times.
- v. In open spaces, adequate spacing of at least 6 feet should be maintained between two seats in same row, and between 2 rows. Large crowds should be avoided.

3.10 Guidelines for Crowd Management at Common Areas

- i. Proper crowd management in the parking lots and outside the premise- duly following physical distancing norms - shall be ensured.
- ii. Number of people in the elevators shall be restricted, with physical distancing norms being observed.
- iii. Crowding in the common areas such as lobbies and washrooms must be avoided at all times, especially during the intermission. Audience may be encouraged to avoid movement during the intermission. Longer intermissions may be used to allow audience seated in different rows of

the auditorium to move in a staggered manner. Announcements should be made to ensure audience obeys the request for not crowding facilities.

3.11 Guidelines for Performance Timings

- i. Staggered timings for performances shall be followed to avoid crowding at the venue.
- ii. The commencement time of a performance, intermission period and finish time at any auditorium shall not overlap with the commencement time, intermission period or finish time of another performance at any other auditorium in the same venue.

3.12 Guidelines for inauguration & completion of program/event

- i. Felicitation of artists whether at the beginning or towards the end of program may be avoided as it may lead to non-adherence of social distancing norms.
- ii. Audience should not be permitted to come close to artists for greeting/ congratulating them/taking pictures etc. at any time during, before, or after the program, as it will be against social distancing norms.

3.13 Guidelines for Sanitization of Venues

- i. Frequent sanitization of the entire premises, common facilities, and all points which come into human contact, e.g. handles, railings, etc. shall be ensured.
- ii. The auditorium/performance space shall be sanitized after every screening.
- iii. Seats should be disinfected immediately before and after every show.
- iv. Regular cleaning and disinfection of the box office, food and beverage areas, employee and staff lockers, toilets, public areas, and back office areas shall be ensured, including before and after every show.
- v. Measures for the safety of sanitization staff such as adequate provisions for rational use of gloves, boots, masks, PPE, etc. shall be undertaken.
- vi. Disinfection of the premises to be taken up if any person is found positive.

3.14 Guidelines for Public Awareness

- i. Dos and Don'ts shall be communicated at prominent access points: Online sale points, digital tickets, public areas like lobbies, washrooms, etc.

- ii. Public Service Announcements on wearing mask, observing physical distancing and maintaining hand hygiene as well as specific announcements on the precautions and measures to be followed within and outside the premises shall be made before the program, during intermission and at the end of the program.
- iii. Provisions must be made for display of Posters/standees/AV media on preventive measures about COVID-19 prominently outside and inside of the venues.

3.15 Guidelines for Air-Conditioning/Cooling

For air-conditioning/ventilation, the guidelines of CPWD shall be followed which, inter alia, emphasizes the following:

- i. Temperature Setting of all air conditioning devices should be in the range of 24-30°C.
- ii. Relative humidity should be in the range of 40-70%.
- iii. Re-circulation of air to be avoided to the extent possible.
- iv. Intake of fresh air should be as much as possible.
- v. Cross ventilation should be adequate.

3.16 Anti-stigma Behaviour

COVID-19 related stigmatization or unruly behaviour should be dealt with strictly by coordination between the auditorium manager(s) and the local authorities.

4. The National Directives for COVID-19 Management and the relevant guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, State/UT Governments, etc. shall be strictly complied with during all activities and operations.

5. These guidelines shall come into effect immediately, and shall continue to be in effect until further orders.

Annexure 1

Model Seating Arrangement for Auditoriums/Closed Performance Spaces

(Black square indicates seats to be left vacant)

