**Endeavours by Indian Plumbing Skills Council during the COVID-19 Pandemic !**

COVID 19 has hit the globe in an unprecedented manner. Even till mid-February, nobody would have thought in their worst dreams that the entire world would start going into lockdown. Lockdown, if experts are to be believed, is the last in the process to break the transmission which includes Isolation and Quarantine as the first two steps. The decisions taken by the government were much-needed and are proving to be very effective. It is being proven by the Government that they value the lives of the citizens over everything else. However, a flipside to this lockdown is that it has stopped the entire wheel of the Economy and this is happening across the globe. But for a country like India, where around 85% workforce is employed in the informal sector, contributing to half of the GDP in the nation, things are not the same as the other nations. Majority of this 85% workforce earns as little as Rs. 150 per day and is employed into professions like house-helpers, a rickshaw pullers, etc. For them, the lockdown is a testing phase. Therefore, it becomes necessary for the citizens to assist them in whichever way we can, whilst keeping the lockdown and social distancing in our minds.

Indian Plumbing Skills Council, a Sector Skill Council working for the upliftment of Plumbing Skills in India, has come up to contribute as per its capacity.

* IPSC as an individual body donated 11 lakh rupees to PM Cares Fund along with the IPSC staff donating their one-day salary for the cause.
* IPSC, working from the last seven years, has made a robust network of Training Partners who are located in different parts of the country and are willing to provide their infrastructure for distribution of food & essential supplies to the citizens. Surprisingly, the number of Training Partners willing to contribute to the call of IPSC is nearly 130. That is indeed a perfect example of how establishing deep and strong roots in the eco-system can help you in the tough time.
* Propelled by IPSC's Efforts, its affiliated Training Partners have additionally begun circulating nourishment and other basic supplies to the individuals out of luck. The exercise has been completed in various areas in various states. Apart from food and water, IPSC’s training partners have also circulated Masks and Sanitizers to the individuals in need.
* After analysing the result in the first week of lockdown through the efforts being carried out by IPSC and the network of training partners wherein the reach on ground was to a limited number of people. It was decided to create more ways of to reach out to more people for help. IPSC decided to start a calling campaign and called almost all their certified plumbers to make sure that they are safe and all their needs are fulfilled. In the areas where there were no IPSC affiliated Training partners, the certified plumbers of the same area were provided with the important contact numbers for any medical emergency, food, and rationing, etc. Taking forward the message of Hon’ble Prime Minister of Social Distancing and staying at home, IPSC staff also advised the plumbers on call to keep these points in mind.
* During the lockdown there have been big 2 issues that were clearly visible. Firstly, there has been a hit to the employment / working opportunities for the plumbing workforce. Secondly, in-case there was plumbing issue at someone’s home, finding a plumber was impossible. IPSC decided to also address the same when it started collating a database of Plumbers, that were willing to work during this time. Over 900 plumbers pan India volunteered to work in their respective districts for plumbing related issues faced by the citizens. With the recent directive by Ministry of Housing Affairs on 15th April wherein self-employed workforce could start work, it became clear that it was essential for this database to be released as means of convenience to the citizens.
* Another major concern that IPSC realised was to ensure that the plumbers working post lockdown remain safe and avoid the further spread of the COVID-19 virus. thus under the vision of the Hon’ble Minister of Skills Dr, Mahendra Nath Pandey, IPSC created a Special Technical Task Force comprising of Mr Vinay Gupta (Vice-Chairman), Mr. MK Gupta, Mr. Milind Shete, Mr. Sandip K Roychoudhury, Mr. Chintan Daiya and many eminent veterans from the Plumbing fraternity. IPSC under the guidance of the Technical Taskforce has drafted Guidelines for Plumbing Workforce to Understand and Maintain Health and Safety Norms post the COVID-19 Pandemic. This has been released Nationally by the Hon’ble Minister himself, under the Skill India Mission. The Guidelines have been released in nearly 10 regional languages for ease of understanding by the plumbers.
* 65% of households in India remain water-deficient until today and several cities have become water stressed. Given the circumstances and the fact that hands need to be washed regularly and for at least 20 seconds, it was important to raise awareness of mindful water usage. IPSC is also advocating mindfulness of water usage to the public, during the washing of hands.
* Post lockdown there will be several New-Normals. We understand that and hence are in the process of taking skilling of plumbing online. Going digital in these times might be the right step for any institution working towards the dissemination of knowledge in various sectors.

IPSC has shown that a problem can be easily dealt with if you have the right vision and a clear intention. The SSC is now becoming a trendsetter for different bodies/organisations and sectors, invoking thought in similar directions.

*From:*

*Mr Vinay Gupta, Vice-Chairman, Indian Plumbing Skills Council (vg@ipssc.in)*

*Mr Vinay Gupta is a technocrat from IIT Delhi and has been manufacturing premium range of Tap ware in Delhi since last 35 years. Mr Vinay Gupta commenced the first ever production of Single Lever Mixers with ceramic cartridges in the year 1986 in India and has the distinction of manufacturing them in India and exporting back to Germany. He is also one of the largest exporters of Bathtubs. Mr. Vinay Gupta is the Founding Members of the Indian Plumbing Association (IPA) and Indian Plumbing Skills Council (IPSC). As the Vice Chairman of IPSC, Mr Vinay Gupta has been spearheading the development of the robust and sustainable eco-system of Skill Development in Plumbing with the Government of India.*









 



 

 

 

