

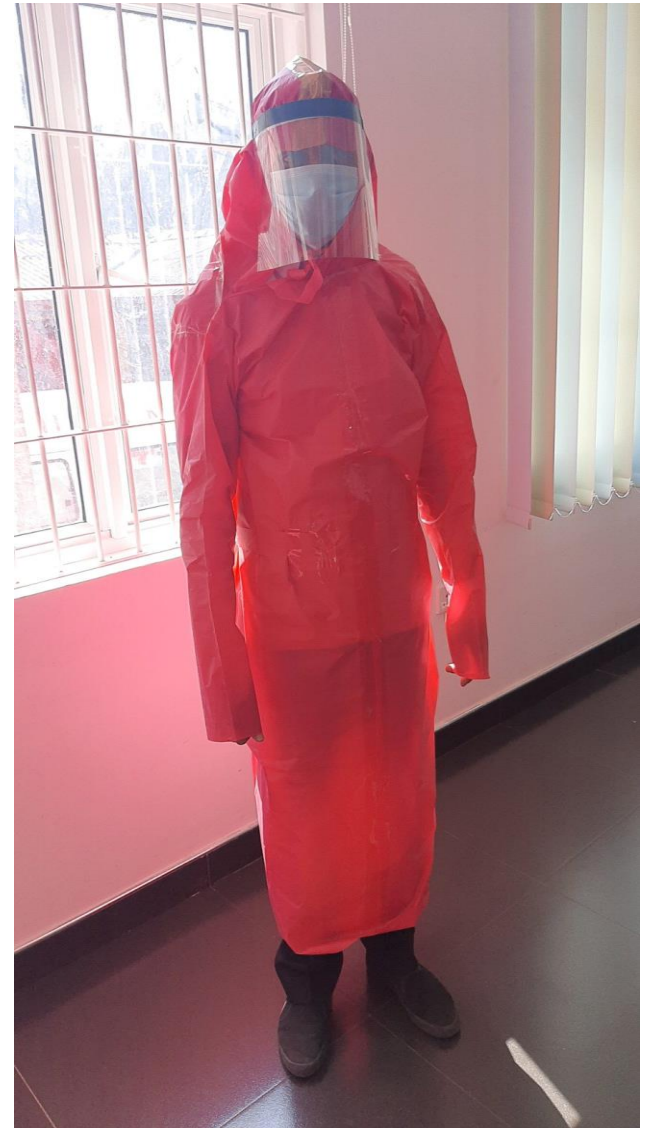
Production of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits with the locally available resources at the regional level

The Regional Directorate of Health Services of Monaragala initiated the production of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits with the resources available at the regional level as soon as the Ministry of Health officially announced regarding COVID 19 epidemic. The project was commenced on 16.03.2020.

The Regional Directorate of Health Services identified the provision of PPE as one of the priorities in order to ensure the safety of health care workers during the COVID 19 epidemic in the country. However, the number of PPE kits available at the Regional Medical Supplies Division at that time was grossly inadequate. The Consultant Microbiologist of DGH Ampara had initiated producing PPE kits with the use of bio degradable polythene and other materials which were locally available and relatively inexpensive. After having an immediate discussion with the hospital authorities, a team of the Regional Directorate of Health Services headed by the Consultant Community Physician was sent to DGH Ampara. The team was trained on the production of the above mentioned PPE kits there. The Regional Directorate of Health Services also had discussions with some Non-Government Organizations and they agreed to provide financial assistance for the purchase of necessary materials. Based on the recommendation by the Consultant Microbiologist of DGH Ampara, production of PPE kits was commenced with the participation of all the staff of the office including the staff of administrative and finance sections. Initially a hands on training was arranged. Groups were assigned and working shifts were introduced. They worked according to COVID 19 safety precautions at separate locations of the office. They were supervised and monitored by the team previously trained at DGH Ampara in order to ensure the quality of the product.

The Regional Directorate of Health Services could produce 1500 PPE kits within a month. Total production cost per a PPE kit was approximately Rs.250 which was relatively inexpensive compared to the unit cost of a standard PPE kit which was around Rs.10000 – 20000 then. The products were distributed promptly to all the health care institutions of the district while the production was being continued. All the frontline health care workers were provided with PPE kits as per the guidelines. Further, training programs on the donning, doffing and proper disposal of PPE were arranged in each and every institution of the district with the participation of the district team headed by the Regional Director of Health Services comprised of the Deputy Regional Director, Consultant Community Physician, Regional Epidemiologist, Medical Officer - Planning, Medical Officer – Maternal & Child Health, Medical Officer – Non Communicable Diseases, Regional Dental Surgeon, Regional Supervising Public Health Nursing Officer, Supervising Public Health Inspector of the District, Public Health Nursing Officer (NCD) and the Public Health Inspector (NCD). The project was conducted with relevance to the core components of 1, 2 and 8 of the Infection Prevention and Control guidelines developed by the World Health Organization in 2009.

In conclusion, the initiative on the production of PPE kits with the locally available resources at the regional level was a timely and cost effective intervention in ensuring the safety of the health care workers in the district at a crucial time, when the number of standard PPE kits available in the district was barely sufficient. It not only resulted in ensuring the safety of health care workers but also it contributed enormously for the motivation of health care workers in the district.



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