



सत्यमेव जयते

Ministry of Health  
and Family Welfare  
Government of India

# SENTINELS OF THE SOIL

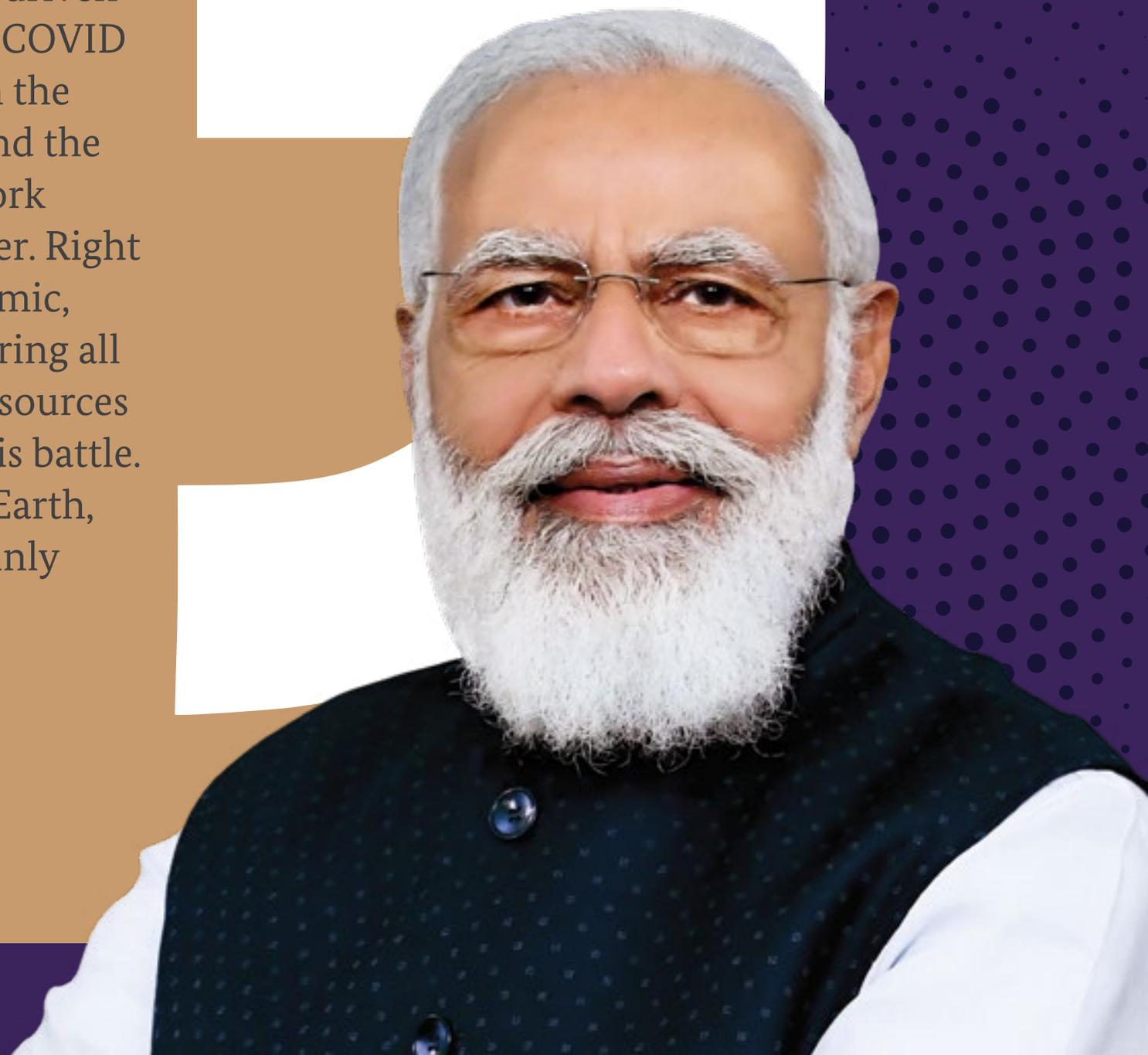
A tribute to Frontline and Healthcare Workers in India's fight against COVID-19





“ India’s COVID-19 fight is people-driven and gets great strength from our COVID warriors. The biggest lesson from the pandemic is that for humanity and the human cause, nations need to work together and move ahead together. Right from the beginning of the pandemic, India has been committed to sharing all our experiences, expertise and resources with the global community in this battle. Guided by the approach of ‘One Earth, One Health’, humanity will certainly overcome this pandemic. ”

**Shri Narendra Modi**  
Hon’ble Prime Minister of India





## Message

2020 and 2021 have been challenging years for all. The unforeseen events that accompanied the global pandemic caught everyone by surprise. India too had a fair share of challenges. At that point of time it was the people from different walks of life who emerged from all corners of the country and rallied behind the Government to combat the pandemic. These were India's brave hearts!

I feel privileged to pay tribute to these Frontline Workers and Healthcare Workers who through their spirit of service at this critical time have earned the title of 'COVID Warriors'. Their selfless and tireless efforts contributed in a big way in the successful management of COVID-19. This photobook will offer the reader a glimpse of the sheer grit and bravado of these COVID warriors that led them to accomplish extraordinary tasks.

On the release of this photobook, I express my deepest gratitude to the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi for his visionary leadership and for steering the country through these troubled times, for being the beacon of hope and courage and for inspiring millions of COVID warriors from taking on the battle from the front. I am sure the readers will find this photobook a compelling read about the battle waged bravely by our COVID warriors.

**Mansukh Mandaviya**



Ministry of Health  
and Family Welfare  
Government of India



**Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar**  
Minister of State  
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare  
Government of India

## Message

The outbreak of the global pandemic in early 2020 took the world by surprise. Covid-19 was a new disease of which little was known and humanity was totally unprepared to deal with it. At such a time even with risk to their lives several people across the country rallied behind the Government to combat the pandemic.

It gives me great happiness to know that the Ministry has with the support of UNICEF captured the stories of these brave people from across India. Indeed, these stories offer a glimpse of the lives of simple folks who rose to the occasion when the nation needed them the most. Often when the going gets tough, the tough get going and these stories embody this spirit. It is indeed endearing how such simple people, despite challenging circumstances, came up with such innovative ideas to spread awareness or lend a helping hand during the pandemic.

Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi led the battle against COVID-19 from the front. It was his zeal and his commitment to protect the people that inspired countless corona warriors to join in the service of humanity. I offer my deepest respect to the collective spirit of humanism displayed by our corona warriors. I believe on reading this book the readers will be equally inspired to hold them in the highest regard.

**Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar**



**Rajesh Bhushan**

Secretary

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare  
Government of India

## Foreword

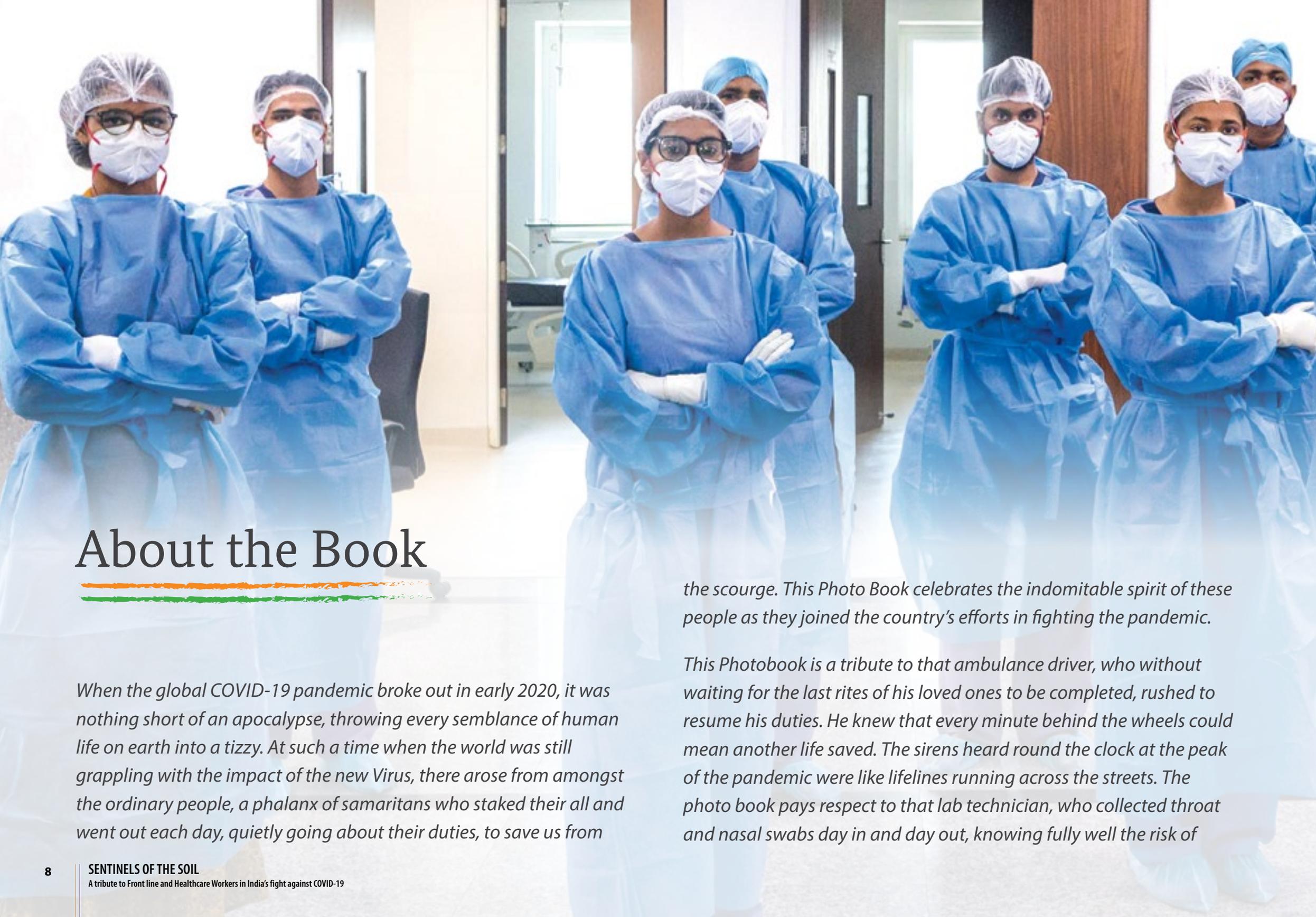
India responded to the COVID-19 pandemic in a proactive & pre-emptive manner. While the response was steered by the Government, it was a collective and collaborative response. India's Healthcare Workers and Frontline Workers like the Doctors, Nurses, Community Health Workers, Sanitation Workers, Police, Volunteers, Ambulance Drivers among many others valiantly stood behind the Government in the hour of the country's crisis.

The Frontline Workers are a critical link in India's response to COVID-19. From providing COVID care services, to counselling and motivating the patients, ferrying patients, sharing factual information with their communities, to being the face of the vaccination drive and carrying it to the last mile and battling vaccine hesitancy - the Frontline Workers are the ones who have sustained the recovery process.

While the individuals whose stories are captured in this book are unique to the Indian context, I am confident that these stories will inspire people globally. It is the self-belief and zeal of the Frontline Workers that lends credence to the words ***"We shall overcome!"***

I acknowledge the contribution of the Ministry's IEC team and UNICEF India in bringing out this photobook. I believe this effort will document the great sacrifice made by the Healthcare and Frontline Workers and bring for them the applause that they truly deserve.

**Rajesh Bhushan**



## About the Book

*When the global COVID-19 pandemic broke out in early 2020, it was nothing short of an apocalypse, throwing every semblance of human life on earth into a tizzy. At such a time when the world was still grappling with the impact of the new Virus, there arose from amongst the ordinary people, a phalanx of samaritans who staked their all and went out each day, quietly going about their duties, to save us from*

*the scourge. This Photo Book celebrates the indomitable spirit of these people as they joined the country's efforts in fighting the pandemic.*

*This Photobook is a tribute to that ambulance driver, who without waiting for the last rites of his loved ones to be completed, rushed to resume his duties. He knew that every minute behind the wheels could mean another life saved. The sirens heard round the clock at the peak of the pandemic were like lifelines running across the streets. The photo book pays respect to that lab technician, who collected throat and nasal swabs day in and day out, knowing fully well the risk of*



*infection to him and his family. The book salutes the Doctor and his healthcare team who as in charge of a Community Health Centre in a remote tribal area, worked tirelessly to overcome the entrenched hesitancy against vaccination in his community, so that science could prevail over superstition. The book celebrates the young volunteers—‘Sathiyas’ (friends) of Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram for finding ingenious new ways to bust myths and for taking the lead in making their community understand the importance of vaccination in keeping them safe from the pandemic. They proved yet again that children*

*can become the harbingers of a new awakening. This book applauds India’s Frontline and Community Health Workers, who transcended their call of duty, reaching hitherto unreached and far-flung terrains with the spirit of not leaving anyone behind.*

*India’s battle against COVID-19 is indeed a story of such sentinels whose images will remain etched in our minds for eons to come. The book pays tribute to the COVID-19 heroes whose groundswell of support at that critical juncture has become a national legend.*

