

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2357
TO BE ANSWERED ON 16TH MARCH, 2021**

ADVERSE IMPACT OF COVID-19 LOCKDOWN ON MENTAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN

2357 # SHRI SAMIR ORAON:

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the COVID-19 lockdown has adversely affected the mental development and health of children
- (b) if so, the details thereof and
- (c) the steps taken by Government to create awareness among children and parents in light of the ill-effects on health of the children?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)**

(a) & (b): The Government has not conducted any study to assess the impact of COVID-19 lockdown on the mental development and health of children. However, realizing the impact that COVID-19 may have on the mental health of the people, the Government has taken a number of initiatives to provide psychosocial support during COVID-19. These initiatives include:

- (i) Setting up of a 24/7 helpline to provide psychosocial support, by mental health professionals, to the entire affected population, divided into different target groups viz children, adult, elderly, women and healthcare workers.
- (ii) Issuance of guidelines/ advisories on management of mental health issues, catering to different segments of the society.
- (iii) Advocacy through various media platforms in the form of creative and audio-visual materials on managing stress and anxiety, and promoting an environment of support and care for all.
- (iv) Issuance of detailed guidelines by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru- "Mental Health in the times of COVID-19 Pandemic - Guidance for General Medical and Specialized Mental Health Care Settings".

- (v) All the guidelines, advisories and advocacy material can be accessed on Ministry of Health and Family Welfare website under “Behavioural Health – Psychosocial helpline” (<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>).
- (vi) Online capacity building of health workers by NIMHANS in providing psychosocial support and training through (iGOT)-Diksha platform.

(c): To address the burden of mental disorders, the Government of India is implementing the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) since 1982. The Government is supporting implementation of the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) under NMHP in 692 districts of the country. To generate awareness among masses about mental illnesses, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities are an integral part of the NMHP. At the District level, funds upto Rs. 4 lakh per annum are provided to each District under the DMHP under the Non-communicable Diseases flexi-pool of National Health Mission for IEC and awareness generation activities in the community, schools, workplaces, with community involvement. Under the DMHP various IEC activities such as awareness messages in local newspapers and radio, street plays, wall paintings etc. are undertaken by the States/UTs. Further, funds upto Rs. 12 lakhs per annum are provided to each district supported under DMHP for targeted interventions with the following objectives:

- (i) To provide class teachers with facilitative skill to promote life skill among their students.
- (ii) To provide the class teachers with knowledge and skills to identify emotional conduct, scholastic and substance use problems in their students
- (iii) To provide class teachers with a system of referral for students with psychological problems to the District Mental Health Team for inputs and treatment.
- (iv) To involve other stakeholders like parents, community leaders to enhance development of adolescents etc.