

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PLANNING

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 2547
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.12.2021

POVERTY ALLEVIATION

2547 Shri Sanjay Raut:

Will the Minister of Planning be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that an additional 90 to 115 million people were pushed into extreme poverty and around 44 per cent of the children are underweight who live under extreme poverty due to COVID-19 pandemic in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto; and
- (c) the details of steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government to reduce the poverty in the country?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS & PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION; MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS

(RAO INDERJIT SINGH)

- (a) to (c): The COVID pandemic had adversely impacted countries globally. Government of India has taken several initiatives to address the impact of the pandemic for the vulnerable segments of the society. In March, 2020, the Union Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister announced **Rs 1.70** Lakh Crore relief package under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana for the poor to help them fight the battle against Corona Virus. The main features of Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana Package are given below:

(i) Under the scheme the Government of India had announced the “Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana” (PM-GKAY) for all beneficiaries covered under the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) as part of the pro-poor PM Garib Kalyan Package for the period April-November, 2020. Around 80 Crore NFSA beneficiaries were allocated additional 5 kg of foodgrains (Wheat or Rice), free of cost for a period of 8 months (April-November 2020), thereby ensuring food security of poor/vulnerable beneficiaries/households in the wake of economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 outbreak in the country. PM-GKAY was announced for a period of two months (May and June) with an estimated expenditure of Rs. 26,602 Crore. Hon’ble Prime Minister, in his address to the nation on 7th June 2021, announced the extension of the PM-GKAY Scheme for a further period of five months till Diwali in November, 2021. In pursuance of the pro-people announcement made by Prime Minister in his address to nation on 07.06.2021 and as part of the Economic Response

to COVID -19, the Union Cabinet has approved the extension for the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana for a period of another 4 months i.e. from December 2021 till March 2022 @ 5 kg per person per month free of cost for all the beneficiaries covered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) (Antodaya Anna Yojana & Priority Households) including those covered under Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). So far, under the PM-GKAY the Government of India had allocated a total of almost 600 LMT foodgrains to the States/UTs equivalent to about Rs. 2.07 Lakh Crore in food subsidy.

(ii). Insurance scheme for health workers fighting COVID-19 in Government Hospitals and Health Care Centres was launched w.e.f. 30.03.2020 to provide comprehensive personal accident cover of Rs. 50 lakhs to around 22.12 lakh public healthcare providers, including community health workers, who may have to be in direct contact and care of COVID-19 patients and who may be at risk of being impacted by this. On account of the unprecedented situation, private hospital staff/retired/volunteer/ local urban bodies/contract/daily wage/ ad-hoc/outsourced staff requisitioned by States/Central hospitals/autonomous hospitals of Central/States/UTs, AIIMS & INIs/ hospitals of Central Ministries, drafted for COVID-19 related responsibilities, were also covered under the scheme. The insurance policy has been extended several times, the last extension being for a further period of 180 days w.e.f. 21.10.2021.

(iii). **Benefit to farmers:** The first instalment of Rs 2,000 due in 2020-21 was front-loaded and paid in April 2020 itself under the PM KISAN Yojana, covering about 8.7 crore farmers. Currently, the ninth installment of PM KISAN was issued of more than Rs. 19,500 crores to more than 9.75 crores beneficiary farmer families in August, 2021.

(iv). **Cash transfers**

(1).**Help to Poor:** A total of 20.40 crores (approx.) PMJDY women account-holders were given an ex-gratia of Rs 500 per month for three months.

(2).**Gas cylinders:** Three free of cost LPG cylinders to 8 crore beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) was provided for April to June 2020. Cash advances for buying the cylinders were transferred to the bank account of the beneficiaries. The scheme was extended till September 30, 2020 for those beneficiaries who have been credited with the advance for buying refills, but have not been able to buy the free cylinders till 30.06.2020.

(3). **Help to low wage earners in organised sectors:** Wage-earners, earning below Rs 15,000 per month, in businesses having less than 100 workers, were provided Twenty-four (24) percent of the monthly wages into their PF accounts, for three months to prevent disruption in their employment. The scheme was extended for another three months, i.e., till August 2020.

(4). **Support for senior citizens (above 60 years), widows and Divyang:** An amount of Rs.1000/- to around 3 crore aged widows and people in Divyang category was provided.

(v). **MGNREGA-** Wages were increased from Rs. 182 to Rs. 202 with effect from 1 April, 2020. This wage increase was estimated to provide an additional Rs. 2,000 benefit annually to a worker and benefit approximately 13.62 crore families.

(vi). **Self-Help groups:** Limit of collateral free lending was increased from Rs. 10 lakhs to Rs. 20 lakhs for women organized through 63 lakh Self Help Groups (SHGs), who supported 6.85 crore households.

(vii). **Other components of PM Garib Kalyan package:**

(I) Employees' Provident Fund Regulations was amended to include Pandemic as the reason to allow non-refundable advance of 75 percent of the amount or three months of the wages, whichever is lower, from the accounts of the employees.

(II) State Governments were directed to utilise the funds available under 'Welfare Fund for Building and Other Constructions Workers', created under a Central Government Act to provide assistance and support to around 3.5 Crore workers registered in the Fund to protect them against economic disruptions.

(III) The State Governments were asked to utilise the funds available under District Mineral Fund (DMF) for supplementing and augmenting facilities of medical testing, screening and other requirements in connection with preventing the spread of COVID-19 pandemic as well as treating the patients affected with this pandemic.

In addition, Government has initiated several targeted schemes that aim to improve the quality of life of the people and aimed at reducing population below poverty line in the country. These include Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Pradhan Mantri Jan-DhanYojana (PMJDY), Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM), Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin, Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Urban, National Health Mission (NHM), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti BimaYojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Atal Pension Yojana, Aspirational Districts Programme, Pradhan Mantri Kissan Mandhan Yojana, Stand Up India Scheme, Skill India Mission, Start Up India Scheme, One nation one ration card scheme, Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Man-dhan yojana, PM Mudra Yojana, Ayushman Bharat Scheme, AMRUT Scheme, Sansad Adharsh Gram Yojana etc.
