

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

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1558
TO BE ANSWERED ON 14TH MARCH, 2023**

GROWING SUICIDE RATES

1558. SHRI NIRANJAN BISHI:

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

- (a) whether Government has undertaken research to assess connection between the growing suicide rate and stress amongst the students in schools and universities and if so, the details thereof, State-wise;
- (b) if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether Government has prepared an action plan to tackle stress and depression amongst the students and affordable mental healthcare to them;
- (d) whether Government has formulized a plan to include mental healthcare in curriculum of schools and universities to de-stigmatize mental health; and
- (e) if not, the reasons thereof?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE
(DR. BHARATI PRAVIN PAWAR)**

- (a) to (c):** To address the burden of mental disorders, the Government of India is supporting implementation of the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) under the National Mental Health Programme in 716 districts of the country for detection, management and treatment of mental disorders/ illness with the major components of counselling in schools and colleges, work place stress management, life skills training, suicide prevention services and Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities for generation of awareness and removal of stigma associated with Mental Illness.

In order to ensure holistic development of adolescent population, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare implements the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) since 2014. RKSK covers both school going and Non School going adolescents. It is a paradigm shift from the clinic-based services to promotion and prevention and reaching adolescents in their own environment, such as in schools, families and communities. Mental Health is one of the key thematic areas of RKSK apart from Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH), nutrition, injuries and violence (including gender-based violence), non-communicable diseases and substance misuse.

RKSK through its interventions namely Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (AFHC), Peer Education Programme and Adolescent Health and Wellness Days (AH&WD) focusing on

creating awareness on mental health issues and providing counselling services, involving the parents, village elders, teachers, healthcare providers and the adolescents themselves as the critical stakeholders.

Ayushman Bharat School Health & Wellness Programme incorporates “Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health” as a dedicated module. Health and Wellness Ambassadors (Teachers) are trained on mental health along with other thematic areas of the programme to support and provide awareness to school children on mental health and well-being. The training focuses on identifying self-emotions signs of distress in self and others and recognizing that ‘mental health and well-being’ exists along a continuum. Health and Wellness Ambassadors take interactive sessions with the students and percolate the messages through weekly sessions promoting joyful learning.

Under the aegis of the School Health Programme under Ayushman Bharat, NCERT has developed a comprehensive package titled “Training and Resource Material: Health and Wellness of School-going Children”. A specific module has been included on “Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health”, which has activities related to the mental health and well-being of students and teachers.

Modular Handbook on Early Identification and Intervention for Mental Health Problems in School Going Children has been developed in collaboration with Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) which contains guidelines for early identification, detection and intervention of mental health problems (stress/illness) in school- going children, for hands-on training of teachers, counsellors and other stakeholders. The Handbook was launched by Ministry of Education on 06th September, 2022.

The Ministry of Education has taken up a proactive initiative, named, ‘Manodarpan’, covering a wide range of activities to provide psychosocial support to students, teachers and families for Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing during the COVID outbreak and beyond. Under the Manodarpan initiative, a Web page (URL: <http://manodarpan.education.gov.in>) has been created carrying advisory guidelines, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), Practical tips, posters, videos, do’s and don’ts for students, teachers/faculty and families for psychosocial support have been uploaded on the Web-page. A National Toll-free Helpline (8448440632) for a country-wide outreach to students from schools, colleges and universities to provide them tele-counselling to address their mental health and psychosocial issues during and after the COVID-19 situation has been set up.

NCERT has started ‘NCERT Counselling Services for School Children’ in April, 2020 to help school students across the country share their concerns. This service is provided free of charge by about 270 counsellors across different regions of the country. Live interactive sessions on ‘SAHYOG: Guidance for Mental Wellbeing of Children’ are telecast on 12 PM eVidya DTH-TV channels for classes 1 to 12. To handle stress and anxiety, recorded videos on Yoga are telecast through 12 DTH TV channels with effect from 1st September, 2020 from Classes 1 to 12 and also digital resources are made available in digital platforms, i.e., DIKSHA.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) provides pre and post examination tele-counselling facilities through centralized toll-free helpline.

Besides the above, the Government has launched a “National Tele Mental Health Programme” on 10th October, 2022, to further improve access to quality mental health counselling and care services in the country. As on 09.03.2023, 25 States/ UTs have set up 36 Tele MANAS Cells and have started mental health services. 63806 calls have been handled on the helpline number.

- (d) & (e):** As per the information provided by the Ministry of Education, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has developed textbooks in Psychology for Classes XI and XII that cover the aspects of stress, anxiety and other related problems in schools. The chapter 3 on 'Meeting life Challenges' of the class XII textbook in Psychology tries to equip the students with causes of stress and the development of positive health. Consequent upon announcement of the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, preparation of a new National Curriculum Framework (NCF) has been taken up.

NCERT has been engaged in strengthening the capacity of teachers and counsellors to extend the support to the students for their emotional and mental well-being, help to deal with fear and find ways of dealing with these. NCERT also offers the Diploma Course in Guidance and Counselling (DCGC) with teacher counsellor model so that such teacher apart from teaching can also extend help to students in dealing with academic, personal and career related issues.

All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has also launched three weeks Students Induction Programmes for providing proper life skill for AICTE approved institutions at UG and PG level. As a part of curriculum, induction programme has been made mandatory for students taking admission in technical institutions. The induction programme includes physical activities, learning and art form, literature and cinema, social awareness and universal human values to make them well acquainted with the culture of the institution, inculcate moral values and familiarize with the essential requirement of the professional education. each student will be required to have one particular skill related to the arts whether it is Performing Arts or Visual. The programme will also enable discussions on universal values that students should have. The first three weeks during the beginning of the academic session will be earmarked for the induction programme.
