

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2297
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23RD SEPTEMBER, 2020**

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN

2297. SHRI BALUBHAU ALIAS SURESH NARAYAN DHANORKAR:

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

- (a) whether there has been an adverse impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on the physical and mental health of children;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken/being taken to promote awareness about mental health issues among children and parents and address the anxiety issues caused in children by the fear of COVID-19 virus?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c) The Government has not conducted any study to assess the impact of COVID 19 lockdown on the physical and mental health of children.

During the Pandemic, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued guidelines for continuity of all essential services including child health.

However, realizing the impact that COVID- 19 may have on the mental health of children and may cause anxiety in them, the Government has taken a number of initiatives to provide psychosocial support during COVID 19: These initiatives include:

- A 24/7 helpline number 08046110007 is set up to provide psychological support by the mental health professionals, to those seeking counseling services including children.
- A detailed guidance (Mental Health in the times of COVID-19 Pandemic- Guidance for General Medical and Specialized Mental Health Care Setting) has been issued by National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS).
- Advocacy through various media platforms including social media in the form of creative and audio-visual materials on managing stress and anxiety and promoting an environment of support and care for all.
- Online capacity building of frontline workers was conducted by NIMHANS for providing psychosocial support through (iGOT)-Diksha platform.

- Orientation of programme officers and adolescent health counsellors on promoting adolescent well being during COVID 19 pandemic was conducted in collaboration with Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS).
- IEC materials like pamphlets and videos have been developed for parents and caregivers on addressing the mental health concerns of children during COVID-19.
- Special episodes on mental health have been aired through Lok Sabha T.V telecasts.
- Funds have been allocated to the States/UTs Emergency COVID Response Plan (ECRP) to carry out IEC campaigns on various topics related to COVID 19 including mental health.
- Advisories issued to States/UTs and Child Care Institutions (CCIs) for ensuring precautionary measures for safety and protection of children living in Child Care Institutions and children in distress. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has also issued advisory regarding care and protection of children.
- All the guidelines/advisories and advocacy materials can be accessed on Ministry of Health and Family Welfare website under “Behavioral Health- Psychosocial helpline” (www.mohfw.gov.in)

Further 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 in 692 districts with the objective to:

- Provide suicide prevention services, work place stress management, life skill trainings and counseling in schools and colleges.
- Provide mental health services including prevention, promotion and long term continuing care at different levels.
- Augment institutional capacity in terms of infrastructure, equipments and human resources for mental healthcare.
- Provide community awareness and participation in the delivery of mental healthcare and services.