GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

RAJYA SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1215
TO BE ANSWERED ON 21.09.2020

MIGRANT LABOURERS INFECTED WITH COVID-19

1215 SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE:

Will the Minister of Labour and Employment be pleased to state:

(a) the number of migrant labourers were infected with COVID-19 virus after the March lockdown was announced;
(b) why were there incidents of mass gatherings at railway stations by migrant labourers to book tickets for returning to their villages;
(c) why could not such gatherings be avoided by Government;
(d) how did such gatherings lead to increase in number of COVID-19 infections among migrants; and
(e) what steps Government has taken to provide proper medical relief to the infected patients?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE (IC) FOR LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT
(SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR)

(a) to (e): The global spread of the corona virus (Covid-19) followed by lockdowns has caused economic disruptions across the globe including India. Covid-19 has also resulted in migration of large number of workers from destination States to the home States. As per the data received from the States, more than 1.06 crore migrant workers, returned to their home-State. In order to facilitate the movement of migrant workers, Ministry of Home Affairs issued orders dated 29th March 2020, instructing all the State/UTs to initiate adequate arrangement of temporary shelters and provision of food, etc. for the stranded migrant workers and screening & quarantine facilities who reach their home states/towns.

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Indian Railways operated 4621 Shramik Special trains between 1st May and 31st August, 2020 carrying 63.19 lakh passengers to their home states. These Shramik special were organised as "Trains on Demand" as and when State Govt. requisitioned those trains. Special arrangements like enhanced sanitisation, special security, medical arrangement, rake sanitisation, free meals & water etc. were made for Shramik operations.

Further, Ministry of Labour and Employment issued comprehensive advisory guidelines dated 27th July, 2020 to all the States/UTs for Covid safety and welfare of migrant workers returning to their work place in the destination state. The State Governments as per the medical Protocol issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, are treating the Covid-positive patients, including the migrant workers.

In order to facilitate their smooth migration and address issues, in respect of wages, grievances, etc., during the national lockdown, Ministry of Labour and Employment has set up twenty Control Rooms across the country. In the process, more than 15000 complaints of the workers were resolved and more than two lakh workers were paid their due wages amounting to about Rs. 295 crore due to proactive measures/interventions taken by the Ministry.

Now, with the process of the unlock-down, many migrant workers have started returning to their work places in the destination States.

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