

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1767
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17TH MARCH, 2022**

ASSISTANCE TO FOLK ARTISTS AMID COVID-19 PANDEMIC

1767 DR. NARENDRA JADHAV:

Will the Minister of Culture be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has come up with a database of the number of folk artists who lost their livelihood due to COVID-19;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether Government has come up with a financial package to assist those folk artists who lost their livelihood, if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether Government has rehabilitated those folk artists who lost their livelihood due to COVID-19, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF CULTURE, TOURISM AND DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH
EASTERN REGION
(SHRI G. KISHAN REDDY)**

(a) to (d) Seven Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs) have been set up by Government of India. These ZCCs organize cultural activities and programmes on regular basis throughout the country. Folk artists of various art forms from all over India are engaged to participate in these programmes for which honorarium, TA/DA, boarding & lodging and local transportation is provided to these artists to enable them to earn their livelihood. For carrying out these cultural activities, these ZCCs are provided annual grant-in-aid by Government of India. These ZCCs adopted the following measures to assist folk artists during COVID – 19 Pandemic:-

Eastern Zone Cultural Centre (EZCC), Kolkata has contacted several NGOs in the member States and has collected lists of artistes in very poor financial condition and forwarded the same to the concerned member State. Odisha, a member State of EZCC has given special incentives to the artists community. EZCC has supported more than 12000 artists through online programmes and organized production oriented workshops for craftsmen at Shilpagram, Santiniketan to help them financially. Due to COVID-19 Pandemic in the country, the entire artists community faced a financial crisis.

South Central Zone Culture Centre (SCZCC), Nagpur organized online programmes and provided financial support to the artists by paying remuneration to them to the tune of Rs. 2,13,46,786/- during 2020-21 and 2021-22.

South Zone Cultural Centre (SZCC), Thanjavur extended financial assistance to the tune of Rs. 8,93,85,000/- to the artists during the Pandemic. This ZCC is in constant touch with its member States to see that the maximum number of folk artists are registered with the concerned State Govt. to enable them to get the financial benefits to be provided to them from time to time.

North Zone Cultural Centre (NZCC), Patiala organized online programmes and provided financial support to the artists to the tune of Rs. 2,59,08,000/- during 2020-21 and 2021-22 (upto 31.12.2021).

North Eastern Zone Cultural Centre (NEZCC), Dimapur organized virtual cultural programmes during COVID-19 Pandemic thereby benefitting 1725 artists during 2020-21 and 5750 artists (till date) during 2021-22 and has also empanelled 9864 cultural groups from its member States.

ZCCs are organizing online programmes and documenting performances of the artists and broadcasting the same on various social media platforms like facebook and Youtube. The artists are paid remuneration for their online performances.

For improving the financial condition of these artists, Ministry of Culture has taken many initiatives to help the artists in distress during COVID-19 Pandemic. A statement indicating steps taken by the Ministry of Culture in this regard is placed at **Annexure**.

STEPS TAKEN TO HELP THE ARTISTS DURING COVID PANDEMIC

- In view of the prevailing conditions, the Ministry of Culture issued guidelines in October, 2020 to help artists/organizations who have already been sanctioned grant under various scheme components of 'Kala Sanskriti Vikas Yojana (KSVY)' to conduct events on virtual mode. This will enable them to avail benefits under these schemes even if they are not able to stage programs in physical format as before and will ensure continued financial assistance to tide over the present crisis.
- All efforts have been made to release the funds to already approved grantees under various financial schemes of the Ministry of Culture. The funds released during the first quarter of F.Y. 2020-21 was much more than that released during 1st quarter of FY 2019-2020. Similar efforts are being made in this financial year also.
- In view of COVID-19, under the scheme of Repertory Grant, exemption has been granted to organizations from mandatory inspection for release of yearly grant.
- All help is also being extended to the grantees for completing various procedural formalities like compliance of mandatory EAT Module. In respect of the scheme component of Cultural Function & Production Grant (CFPG), one-time exemption has been granted to the organizations from filing the expenditure in EAT module for release of 1st instalment to the grantees of 43rd and previous meetings of CFPGS.
- In view of COVID-19, under the Scheme of Scholarship & Fellowship for Promotion of Art & Culture, selection of Senior Fellows for the Batch Year 2019-20 & mid-term and final evaluation of 06 monthly reports of earlier batches (upto Batch Year 2017-18) in respect of both Junior/Senior Fellows has been held through virtual mode in view of the large number of members of the Expert Committee.
- Under the scheme of 'Artists Pension', one time exemption has been granted regarding submission of the mandatory annual income certificate by the pensioners.
- All the ZCCs have encouraged the folk artists/artisans to get registered with their member States in order to avail the schemes announced by the States.
- South Zone Cultural Centre (SZCC), Thanjavur in association with a Chennai based NGO Samarpana organized an online fund raising programme "Notes of Nector-100 for 1000" participated by eminent artists from North and South. This fund raiser initiative has enabled 1200 families of folk artists to get financial assistance, groceries etc. during COVID-19 Pandemic.
- All the ZCCs took care of artistes admitted to hospitals/nursing homes and held consultations with doctors to ensure the best treatment for them. Vaccination Camps in collaboration with a multispecialty hospital in Kolkata was arranged by EZCC through CSR fund for their artistes. Emergency lifesaving medicines/injections required by some of the artists admitted in the hospital were arranged by ZCCs through Health Department of the State Governments.
- Efforts have been made to engage artists during Commemoration events enabling them to avail financial benefits out of the grants released by the Ministry.