

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION & LITERACY

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1638
ANSWERED ON 15.03.2023

Appointment of counsellor in educational institutions

1638 Dr. Ameer Yajnik:

Will the Minister of *Education* be pleased to state:

- (a) whether there is any provision to appoint a counsellor by an educational institution to ensure the mental health of the enrolled students;
- (b) the proportion of private schools employing counsellors;
- (c) the proportion of Government schools employing counsellors; and
- (d) whether Central Government is planning to launch any comprehensive policy to ensure mental health in schools?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
(SMT. ANNPURNA DEVI)

(a) The National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, inter-alia, emphasises on the importance of the nutrition and health (including mental health) of children which can be addressed, through healthy meals and the introduction of well-trained social workers, counsellors, and community involvement in the schooling system to optimise students learning. (NEP para 2.9 and 4.28)

(b) & (c) Education being a subject in the Concurrent list of the Constitution and majority of schools are under the jurisdiction of State/Union Territory (UT) Governments, it is for the respective State/ UT Government to take appropriate action for employing counsellors in their schools. So far as schools affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) are concerned, 87% schools are employing counsellors in their schools. All JNVs have the provision of engaging one male and one female counselor on contract basis in each JNV and in KVs, there is provision for engaging counsellor on contractual basis in order to ensure mental health of enrolled students.

(d) The Ministry of Education has undertaken an initiative, named, 'Manodarpan', covering a wide range of activities to provide psychosocial support to students, teachers and families for Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing. A Working Group, having experts from the fields of education, mental health and psychosocial issues as its members, has been set up to monitor and promote the mental health issues and concerns of students and to facilitate providing of support to address the mental health and psychosocial aspects during and after COVID-19 lockdown, through counselling services, online resources and helpline. Under the

Manodarpan initiative a Web page (URL: <http://manodarpan.education.gov.in>) has been created on the Ministry of Education website 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. 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, which has been functional since 21st July, 2020. All the State and Union Territory Governments were advised to give wide publicity to the Manodarpan initiative of this Ministry so that the interested students/teachers/parent could make full use of these services. Series of Webinars and discussion sessions 'Paricharcha' are held under the Manodarpan initiative to reach out to students and all stakeholders with the aim to create awareness about mental health and well-being concerns and ways of dealing/coping with them. It provides a platform for all to seek psychosocial support from experts in the field of mental health, counsellors, psychologists and educationists . 'Sahyog' live interactive sessions are held every day for students (classes VI-XII) from 5-5:30 pm on PM e-vidya channel with the focus on providing guidance for promoting mental well-being among students.

The Ministry of Education with the help of National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) had conducted in the year 2022 a Mental Health Survey keeping in view the perspectives of National Education Policy, 2020 which emphasizes students' mental health and well-being in order to provide holistic development. A total of 3,79,842 students of classes 6 to 12 from different schools across the country participated in the survey.

Further, the Ministries of Health & Family Welfare and Education jointly implement School Health and Wellness Programme under Ayushman Bharat to improve health and mental wellness outcomes of school going children. Two teachers selected in every elementary school are trained as 'Health and Wellness Ambassadors' to transact weekly on health promotion and disease prevention with the children. In spite of Covid restrictions, National Resource Group (NRG) trained 1700 State Resource Groups (SRGs) across all States/UTs. SRGs facilitate the training of Health and Wellness Ambassadors (HWAs) in their respective states. More than 2,49,000 HWAs have been trained so far from 279 districts in 33 States/UTs. About 1.4 lakh Head Teachers of School have also been appropriately oriented. The programme is not only expanding to more districts, but the trained HWAs have also begun weekly school-based activities with students in many States/UTs. In order to strengthen reporting by HWAs, a comprehensive management information system has also been operationalized and is currently being pilot tested in select States.
