

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

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 412
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06TH FEBRUARY, 2024**

SUICIDES AMONG STUDENTS

412. SHRI HARBHAJAN SINGH:

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

- (a) whether Government is taking measures to curb the rising number of suicides reported among students in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) the details of other measures being taken to ensure mental health wellness among students in the country; and
- (d) the proposed measures to be taken therefor?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE
(PROF. S. P. SINGH BAGHEL)**

(a) to (d) 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 738 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.

Under the tertiary care component of NMHP, 25 Centres of Excellence have been sanctioned to increase the intake of students in PG departments in mental health specialities as well as to provide tertiary level treatment facilities. Further, the Government has also supported 19 Government medical colleges/institutions to strengthen 47 PG Departments in mental health specialities. Mental Health Services are also provisioned for 22 AIIMS. These services are also available under PMJAY.

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.

In addition to the above, the Government is also taking steps to strengthen mental healthcare services at primary healthcare level. The Government has upgraded more than 1.6 lakh SHCs, PHCs, UPHCs and UHWCs to Ayushman Arogya Mandirs. Mental health services have been added in the package of services under Comprehensive Primary Health Care provided at these Ayushman Arogya Mandirs. Operational guidelines on Mental, Neurological, and Substance Use Disorders (MNS) at Ayushman Arogya Mandirs have been released under the ambit of Ayushman Bharat.

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.

The Government has released the National Suicide Prevention Strategy in November, 2022. The National Strategy for Suicide Prevention provides a framework for multiple stakeholders to implement activities for prevention of suicides in India. This national strategy aims to reduce suicide mortality by 10% in the country by 2030. The national strategy includes an action framework with proposed actions with key stakeholders, implementation framework and mechanism, thus providing a path forward for preventing suicides.

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 30.01.2024, 34 States/ UTs have set up 47 Tele MANAS Cells and have started tele mental health services. More than 6,28,000 calls have been handled on the helpline number.

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.
