

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3381  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2019  
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER**

**3381. SHRI D.K.SURESH:**

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken note that Autism is a serious developmental disorder that impacts the nervous system and affects one's cognitive, emotional and physical health, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether it is a fact that in India alone, one in 68 children is reportedly diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and yet not many people are aware of this mental condition;
- (c) if so, whether the Government is taking any measure to create awareness among parents about the said disorder;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) whether the Government has taken any measures to put necessary mechanism in place to treat the ASD at an early stage and if so, the details thereof?

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

- (a) Autism Spectrum Disorder, which is a neuro-developmental disability, has been recognized as a specified disability under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Its impact can be reduced through early intervention, removing barriers of all nature and facilitating measures for holistic development of the child in an inclusive environment. There are a number of hospitals/ Institutions across the country that offer diagnostic and treatment services for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). In addition, there are many State Government hospitals and non-governmental organizations that offer diagnostic, medical, psychiatric, counselling education and training services.
- (b) As per available information, there are no large scale studies conducted on prevalence of Autism in India. As informed by the Central Institute of Psychiatry, Ranchi, the estimate of 1 in 68 children having autism is an estimate from Centre for Disease Control and Prevention's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Network of United States of America for multiple communities in the United States.

(c) & (d): Under the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP), generation of community awareness is a continued activity. Awareness is generated in the community regarding the mental disorders and the availability of mental health services by adopting various mass media and interpersonal communication methods.

(e) Under the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram, Child Health Screening and Early Intervention Services cover 30 selected health conditions including, inter-alia, Autism Spectrum Disorder for its screening, early detection and free management. All pre-school children below 6 years of age are screened by mobile block health teams for the above mentioned conditions at the Anganwadi Centres. Children suspected to be suffering from developmental delays are referred to District Early Intervention Centres (DEIC) for further management. A team consisting of Pediatrician, Medical Officer, Staff Nurses, Paramedics, etc. provide services for providing follow-up referral support, treatment and management of such health conditions. Further, with a view to address the burden of mental disorders, the Government of India is supporting implementation of the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) under NMHP in 655 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 IEC activities for generation of awareness and removal of stigma associated with Mental Illness.