

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3769  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11.08.2023**

**DISABILITY QUESTIONNAIRE IN NFHS**

**3769. SHRI GAURAV GOGOI:  
SHRI NATARAJAN P.R.:  
SHRI RAVNEET SINGH BITTU:**

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that the fifth National Family Health Survey (NFHS) between 2019 and 2021 was the first time that the questions related to disability have been included in that survey and questions capture five types of disability viz. locomotor, visual, hearing, speech, mental and an 'others' option;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the reasons for excluding other disabilities recognized by the 'Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act';
- (c) whether the Government is aware that the NFHS says that their estimate is of 'de jure' persons with disabilities, which means those disabled, according to the law;
- (d) if so, whether the Government plans to expand the types of disabilities in the next NFHS to avoid discrimination against persons with certain disabilities; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER**

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE  
(DR. BHARATI PRAVIN PAWAR)**

- (a): Yes, the questions related to disability were included in the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) (2019-21) for the first time.
- (b): The questions to be included in NFHS-5 (2019-21) questionnaire was based on recommendations of Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprising of representatives from concerned Central Ministries including Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and development partners and domain knowledge experts, constituted for smooth functioning of the survey. The Committee at that time observed that there is a dedicated survey on persons with disabilities conducted by National Sample Survey (NSS) in its 76<sup>th</sup> round with wider coverage.
- (c): The disability data was collected in NFHS for '*de-jure*' members of the household implying "the persons who usually reside in the sample households".

(d) and (e): The questions in the NFHS-6 questionnaire is based on the recommendations of Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and other high-level Committees comprising of representatives from concerned Central Ministries such as M/o Social Justice and Empowerment, M/o Statistics and Programme Implementation, M/o Women and Child Development, NITI Aayog etc., development partners and domain knowledge experts, constituted for smooth functioning of the survey. After detailed discussions and deliberations, the non-inclusion of disability-related questions in NFHS-6 was decided on the following grounds:

- (i) Most of the data related to disability are already available in the survey report of National Sample Survey (NSS) 76th round namely “Survey of Persons with Disabilities”, which was a dedicated survey conducted by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) during July-December 2018 to collect detailed information on this specific aspect.
- (ii) The primary focus of NFHS is maternal and child health and other associated questions. The dedicated survey of NSS, gives a better coverage of disability prevalence, having wider indicators on disability as compared to NFHS-5. Based on data collection for a few parameters on disability in NFHS, it is not possible to adequately capture the all-India extent of disability and will significantly underestimate the prevalence of disability.
- (iii) Further, types of disability had several medical terminologies, which may result in inappropriate responses as the respondents might not be aware of the specific disabilities.

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