

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.989
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22ND NOVEMBER, 2019**

RECOMMENDATION OF EXPERT COMMITTEE ON TRIBAL HEALTH

989. SHRI RAHUL GANDHI:

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

- (a) whether the Ministry has accepted the recommendations of the Expert Committee on Tribal Health in India;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the details of the measures being taken to assess the state of health of various tribal communities in India, particularly in Kerala?

ANSWER

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

(a) & (b): An Expert Committee on Tribal Health was constituted jointly by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs which submitted its report to the Ministry. The Report is available in public domain at <https://nhm.gov.in/index1.php?lang=1&level=1&sublinkid=1110&lid=630>

(c): As per information received from Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), in order to have all the Institutes / Centers working in the field of tribal health on a single platform, ICMR established Tribal Health Research Forum (THRF) on 9th August 2010, which had been committed to prioritize research addressing specific health needs of the tribal population. Under this THRF, there are 16 Institutes / Centers and major Divisions of ICMR under leadership of National Institute of Research In Tribal Health (NIRTH), Jabalpur. 10 Tribal Health Research Units (THRUs) were established by ICMR in two phases, which have also been functioning, with an overall mandate to improve tribal health through diagnosis and develop strategies for management in their sub-population with emphasis on various infectious diseases as well as non-communicable diseases, apart from hemoglobinopathies, nutrition and maternal and child health etc. These units worked to outline the health problems of tribal population and generated evidence for policy change. Key Contributions to the National Health Research Programmes / Policies by ICMR are at Annexure.

In addition, surveys like National Family Health Survey (NFHS), and District Level Household Survey (DLHS), conducted by the Ministry give estimates inter-alia for tribal health indicators.

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Key Contributions to the National Health Research Programmes / Policies by ICMR

- Established facilities for newborn screening for SCD, prenatal diagnosis of - thalassemia syndrome, sickle cell disorders and micro mapping of G6PD deficiency, in Madhya Pradesh, Assam and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Established Sickle Cell diagnostic Clinics in 5 tribal districts of MP and in a remote tribal district Baster in CG. The same is underway in 22 tribal districts.
- Conducted regional training workshops / training of Master Trainers on diagnosis of SCD and management - Inducted in 19 States. More than 1.5 crore tribal school children screened.
- Developed evidence-based malaria intervention model (Dindori) for control of forest and tribal malaria. The model up-scaled to make a model in malaria elimination through PPP mode in Mandla district of MP through MEDP project. Prepared “Tribal Malaria Action Plan” as a part of NHM - Contributed to policy formulation for Malaria-in-Pregnancy. Evaluated bivalent malaria rapid kits (RDTs) inducted into National programme. Monitoring therapeutic efficacy in malaria endemic tribal regions of the country to support National programme.
- A sharp decrease in Malaria incidence has been shown in Car Nicobar since the Tsunami (API decreased from 105 in 2005 to <1 in 2013). Further, repeated surveys conducted in Car Nicobar showed a declining prevalence of pulmonary tuberculosis, which is attributed to the better socio-economic status and housing brought about the post-tsunami reconstruction and rehabilitation initiatives. Also, implemented a programme for elimination of lymphatic filariasis from its only focus in India viz. the Nancowry of islands. The programme has almost achieved its objective of bringing down the mf rate <1%.
- Among Saharias (a PVTG in India), several studies identified and reported very high TB prevalence (upto 3000 / 1,00,000). Intervention study among this tribe demonstrated decline in TB prevalence and an intensified TB control program (Research cum Intervention study) has been launched.
- Developed universally accepted Nutritional supplementation and safe drinking water based intervention model for fluorosis prevention & control developed and included in the National Program.
- Sick cell anaemia is among over 1 lakh tribal population of Rajasthan has been studied and a prevalence of about 10% recorded.
- Kathodi-Katkari tribe in Karnataka has been successfully assessed for health status of and the report / recommendations have been submitted to Dept of Tribal Welfare and Govt. of Karnataka, Mysuru for mitigating the ailments among the tribes.
- Regular health and nutritional surveys have been carried out among the accessible indigenous tribes of Andaman and Nicobar (Onges, Andamanese, Shompens, Jarawas).
- A project to eliminate tuberculosis from Nicobarese of Car Nicobar and subperiodic filariasis from Nicobarese of Nancowry group of Islands are ongoing.

- Various studies have been recently initiated and are currently being undertaken, which has a direct relevance for health of tribal communities as below :
 - New born screening for sickle cell anaemia has been initiated in tribal populations of 6 States.
 - Understanding tribal culture, lifestyle, animal husbandry activities and cause of death in five tribes of India through establishment of tribal habitats.
 - Study on prevalence and severity of hemoglobin disorders (Hemoglobinopathies and G6PD Deficiency) and the measures of multi-morbidity and morbidity burden of selected hemoglobinopathies among tribal populations of Tamil Nadu.
 - Project to eliminate malaria from Car Nicobar.
 - Surveillance of long term sequelae of chronic hepatitis B infection and risk reduction from Car Nicobar.
 - Double fortified salt (DEC + Iodine) as a supplementary measure to the ongoing MDA for eliminating a persistent foci of diurnally sub periodic *Wuchereria bancrofti* in nancowry group of islands.
 - Comprehensive Health Assessment including a study of reproductive tract infections among women of Lahaul & Spiti, Himachal Pradesh.
 - Lifestyle intervention program on health seeking behavior, malnutrition and malaria prevention in Ashram school children of Dindori district in Madhya Pradesh.
 - Socio-economic development among tribes of India: Analysis of 2001 & 2011 censuses.
 - Revitalizing ethnomedicine among Baiga of Madhya Pradesh - an exploratory research.

As regards the assessment of health of various tribal communities particularly in Kerala, key research studies undertaken by ICMR are as follows:

- Entomological and Epidemiological investigations on Leishmaniasis among the *Kani* forest Tribes in the tribal settlements of Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala;
- Studies on distribution and biological characteristics of the members of *Fluviatilis-Minimus* group for effective vector control strategies in tribal areas of India (including Kerala);
- A rapid survey on assessment of nutritional status of under-five children and women and cause of infant deaths among tribes of Attappady hills, Palakkad district, Kerala;
- Nutritional status of tribal population and prevalence of hypertension in various states of India including Kerala.

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