

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1103
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2020**

INCREASE IN COVID TESTS

1103. SHRI KANUMURU RAGHU RAMA KRISHNA RAJU:

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

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of the need for more COVID-19 tests across the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the suggestions made by the States to control the spread of Corona virus;
- (d) whether the Government has taken into account the States/UTs' request to increase the funding through National Disaster Response Fund and if so, the response of the Government thereto; and
- (e) the details of other remedial measures being taken by the Government to extend the help to fight COVID-19 pandemic?

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

(a) and (b) Recognizing the importance of early detection of cases through testing, capacity for COVID-19 testing in the country has been enhanced manifold. With the evolving scenario, laboratory network is continuously being strengthened. From a situation of a single laboratory equipped to undertake testing for Covid in January, presently 1,751 laboratories are conducting COVID-19 Testing (as on 16th September 2020). Laboratories have been established in difficult terrains like Ladakh, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland as well as other North Eastern states, Lakshadweep, and Andaman & Nicobar island. Currently the testing is about 1 million tests a day (which translates to 720 tests per million population per day), much higher than that stipulated by WHO which is 140 tests per million population per day. As on 16th September, 2020, total of 6,05,65,728 samples have been tested. Besides the gold standard, Real Time Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR), testing is also being done through Truenat and CBNAAT platforms. In addition, rapid Point-of-Care (PoC) Antigen detection tests are being utilized which have quick turn-around time.

(c) During the video conferences held with the States, the States have suggested requirement of augmenting testing facilities, creation of infrastructure, requirement of PPE, Ventilators etc., fund requirement and best practices followed in their respective States.

(d) Expenditure related to COVID -19 measures is allowed is allowed under State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) only , on (i) Measures for quarantine for sample collection and screening, (ii) Procurement of essential equipment/laboratories for response to COVID-19, (iii) Relief measures – provision for temporary accommodation, feed, clothing, medical care etc. No request was received with regard to increase the funding through National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF)

(e) Government of India has taken a series of actions to prevent, control and mitigate the impact of COVID-19. India followed a whole of Government and whole of society approach. Hon'ble Prime Minister, a High level Group of Ministers (GoM), Cabinet Secretary, Committee of Secretaries and senior officers in MoHFW continue to monitor public health response to COVID-19 in the country.

The public health actions were taken in a pre-emptive, pro-active, graded manner based on the evolving scenario. A number of travel advisories were issued restricting inflow of international travelers, till such time, commercial flights were suspended on 23rd March, 2020. Till then, a total of 14,154 flights with 15,24,266 passengers have been screened at these airports. Screening was also done at 12 major and 65 minor ports and land border crossings. In the initial part of the pandemic, India evacuated a large number of stranded passengers from then COVID affected countries (China, Italy, Iran, Japan, Malaysia) and again in the un-lockdown phase, a total of 13,18,891 passengers have been brought back (as on 14th September, 2020) and followed up.

Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) is conducting contact tracing through community surveillance. In the earlier part of the pandemic, this was done for travel related cases and subsequently for cases being reported from community as a part of containment strategy. As on 14th September 2020, a total of about 40 lakh persons have been kept under surveillance. There are 726 laboratories conducting COVID-19 Testing. India is testing is about 1 million samples a day. A total of 5.8 crore samples have been tested so far (as on 14th September 2020).

As on 15th September, 2020, a total of 15,360 COVID treatment facilities with 13,20,881 dedicated isolation bed without O₂ support have been created. Also, a total of 2,32,516 oxygen supported isolation beds and 63,194 ICU beds (including 32,409 ventilator beds). Guidelines on Clinical management of COVID-19 have been issued and are being updated regularly.

States are being supported in terms of supply of logistics. So far 1.41 Crore of PPE Kits, 3.44 crores N-95 masks, 10.84 crore tablets of Hydroxychloroquine and 30,663 ventilators and 1,02,400 oxygen cylinders have been supplied to States/UTs/ Central Government hospitals so far (as on 14th September, 2020).

Various cadres of personnel and volunteers across sectors and departments for COVID related works and maintenance of other essential medical services have been worked out, trained through resources made available on the website of MoHFW, iGOT (online platform) by DOPT (<https://igot.gov.in/igot/>).

MoHFW website is being daily to provide general public with information on current status of COVID-19 spread in India. Communication material is also being hosted on MoHFW website and through social media. A dedicated call centre / helpline (1075) has been started to guide community at large which are being used by the citizens very effectively and on a regular basis.

More than 30 vaccine candidates have been supported which are in different stages of development, 3 candidates are in advanced stage of Phase I/II/III trials and more than 4 are in advanced pre-clinical development stage. A National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 has been constituted on 7th August, 2020, under NITI Ayog. Thirteen clinical trials of repurposed drugs have been undertaken to build a portfolio of therapeutic options for Covid-19 patients.

A package of Rs 15,000 crores was approved under 'India Covid-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package'. A total of Rs. 4,256.79 crore of grants were provided under COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness package.

Besides this State/UTs have been supported for technical guidance in terms of guidelines, advisories, containment plans, Standard Operating Procedures etc.