

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

**LOK SABHA**

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2098  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23<sup>RD</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2020**

**SHORTAGE OF DOCTORS DURING COVID PANDEMIC**

**2098. SHRI L.S. TEJASVI SURYA:  
SHRI PRATHAP SIMHA:  
ADV. ADOOR PRAKASH:**

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

- (a) whether the Corona virus pandemic challenge brought forth the shortage of doctors and medical staff in various parts of the country and if so, the measures taken by the Government to address the shortage;
- (b) whether the Government intends to permit 50,000 existing diploma holders to convert their diploma into an MS/MD degree after the submission of a thesis report, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government intends to permit final year MBBS students to perform duty in COVID-19 designated hospitals, if so, the details thereof and the names of the States which have delegated the responsibility to final year MBBS students; and
- (d) whether the Government is aware of the shortage of nursing staff in various hospitals in the country, if so, the measures taken by the Government to incentivize nurses to perform duty during the Corona virus pandemic?

**ANSWER**

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

(a): COVID-19 pandemic has underlined the need for effective utilization of Health Care Workers.

Public Health being a State Subject, all the administrative and personnel matters, including that of appointment/recruitment/ engagement of doctors, nurses and other health workers in public health facilities lie with the respective State Governments. The shortage of health human resource in public health facilities varies from State to State. However, under National Health Mission (NHM), financial and technical support is provided to the States/UTs to strengthen their healthcare systems, including support for engagement of human resources. Government of India has taken various steps to optimize the number of doctors and specialists in the country—such as increasing the number of seats in UG/PG level at various medical educational institutes/medical colleges across the country; encouraging doctors to work in remote and difficult areas; encouraging States to adopt flexible norms for engaging specialists for public health facilities by various mechanisms like ‘contracting in’ and ‘contracting out’ of specialist services under National Health Mission. State/UTs have also been allowed to offer negotiable salaries to attract Specialists including flexibility in strategies such as ‘You quote, we pay’. Financial support is also provided to States for providing performance-based incentives, providing accommodation and transport facilities in rural and remote areas, sponsoring training programmes etc. to attract human resources to address the issue of shortage of doctors and specialists in the public health facilities. Also, States are advised to put in place transparent policies of posting and transfer, and ensure rational deployment.

(b): No. There is no proposal to permit 50,000 existing diploma holders to convert their diploma into an MS/MD degree after the submission of a thesis report.

(c): The final year MBBS student may be trained about Covid-19 management in theory and practice, under supervision of faculties, but they cannot be assigned any clinical duties.

(d): Public Health being a State Subject, all the administrative and personnel matters, including that of appointment/recruitment/ engagement of doctors, nurses and other health workers in public health facilities lie with the respective State Governments. The shortage of health human resource in public health facilities varies from State to State. However, under National Health Mission (NHM), financial and technical support is provided to the States/UTs to strengthen their healthcare systems, including support for engagement of human resources.

The Government has taken several measures to incentivize the nurses to perform duty during the Corona virus pandemic including inter alia trainings to build their capacities and measures for psychosocial support. Also, in order to ensure the safety of health workers, various initiatives such as insurance cover for COVID-19 warriors under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Insurance Scheme, zero tolerance policy against all offenders for assaulting and threatening healthcare providers, prophylactic medication and testing of health workers, have been undertaken.