

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

**LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 351
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 19TH MARCH, 2021
CSE REPORT ABOUT COVID-19 EFFECT ON CHILDREN**

***351. SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH ALIAS LALAN SINGH:
SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV:**

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

(a) whether the Government is aware of the report of the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) regarding the COVID-19 effect on children aged between 0-14 years in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government has formulated any action plan to control and minimise the adverse effects of COVID-19 on such children and if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government has made any assessment of adverse effects of COVID-19 on mental health of children and has provided psychological support through the health care professionals during COVID-19 pandemic and if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the number of children benefitted from such counselling services?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(DR. HARSH VARDHAN)**

(a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.351* FOR 19TH MARCH, 2021**

(a) & (b) Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) is a Non-Governmental Organization working in the area of environmental issues. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is not aware of any report prepared by CSE regarding effect of COVID-19 on children aged between 0-14 years in the country.

(c) Analysis of those affected by COVID-19 in India, age-wise, shows that children in the age group of 0-14 years are less affected. Further, the infection among children are mild and most of these children infected with COVID-19 remain asymptomatic. Hence no specific action plan has been formulated in the current response phase to minimize the adverse effects of COVID-19 on such children. Very rarely a severe illness, in form of Multi-System Inflammatory Syndrome, has been identified. This happens usually after 3 to 6 weeks after COVID-19 infection. Department of Pediatrics, AIIMS, is documenting long term effect of COVID-19 infection in children.

For appropriate management of COVID-19 cases, a three-tier arrangement of health facilities [(i) COVID Care Center with isolation beds for mild or pre-symptomatic cases; (ii) Dedicated COVID Health Centre (DCHC) with oxygen supported isolation beds for moderate cases and (iii) Dedicated COVID Hospital (DCH) with ICU beds for severe cases] has been implemented. Guidelines on Clinical management of COVID-19 have been issued. This guideline also provides for management of complications.

(d) & (e) The Ministry of Education, Government of India, has initiated a programme called 'MANODARPAN' covering a wide range of activities to provide psychosocial support to students, teachers and families for Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing during the COVID outbreak and beyond.

A National Toll-free helpline 8448440632 to provide tele-counselling for students, parents and teachers to help cope with the situation. The standard operating procedure for health and safety protocols for reopening of schools issued by Ministry of Education has incorporated guidelines for promoting emotional well-being of students and teachers. A webpage <https://mhrd.gov.in/covid-19> on the website of Ministry of Education contains advisories and motivational posters etc.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has set up a 24/7 helpline was set up through NIMHANS, Bangalore, on 29.03.2020 to provide psychosocial support, by mental health professionals, to the entire affected population, divided into different target groups viz children, adult, elderly, women and healthcare workers.

Later other two Central Mental Health Institutions namely LGB Regional Institute of Mental Health, Tezpur and Central Institute of Psychiatry, Ranchi, along with various States/UTs were also on-boarded to extend the services in regional/ local languages also. Guidelines/ advisories on management of mental health issues, catering to different segments of the society, were issued.

All the guidelines, advisories and advocacy material can be accessed on Ministry of Health and Family Welfare website under “Behavioural Health – Psychosocial helpline” (<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>). Various media platforms were used for creative and audio-visual materials on managing stress and anxiety, and promoting an environment of support and care for all.

Further, to address the burden of mental disorders, the Government of India is implementing the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP). The Government is supporting implementation of the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) under NMHP in 692 districts of the country. To generate awareness among masses about mental illnesses, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities are an integral part of the NMHP. At the District level, funds up to Rs. 4 lakh per annum are provided to each District under the DMHP for awareness generation activities in the community, schools, workplaces, with community involvement.
