

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 901
TO BE ANSWERED ON 5TH FEBRUARY, 2021**

COVID WASTE MANAGEMENT WORKERS

901. SHRI T.R. BAALU:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that India's solid waste management workers, who had to collect, sort and dispose of hazardous and highly contaminated bio-medical wastes have inadequate protective gears, stipulated in the 'Covid-19 Vaccination Guidelines' recently released by his Ministry;
- (b) if so, the reasons for not taking cognizance of such workers in the guidelines;
- (c) whether there is an abject dearth of data on the number of waste management workers infected with COVID-19 in India and if so, the action taken by the Government in this regard;
- (d) whether there is a need to vaccinate India's waste management workers on a priority basis as a recognition of their immense contribution and risks undertaken by them to help the civil societies; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the measures proposed to be taken by the Government?

ANSWER

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

(a) & (b): As per Bio-Medical Waste Management Rules, 2016, issued by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), it is the responsibility of the occupier to ensure occupational safety of all its health care workers and others involved in handling of biomedical waste by providing appropriate and adequate personal protective equipment. Further, CPCB has issued guidelines namely 'Handling, Treatment & Disposal of biomedical waste generated during Treatment/Diagnosis/Quarantine of COVID-19 patients'.

As per guidelines, the staff involved in handling and collection of general solid waste and biomedical waste from isolation wards, quarantine homes or home care centers shall be provided with adequate Personnel Protective Equipment such as three layer masks, splash proof aprons/gowns, heavy-duty gloves, gum boots and safety goggles. These PPEs are required to be worn all the time while collecting of waste from quarantine center/quarantine homes/home care/waste deposition centers.

In Central Govt. Hospitals in Delhi, namely Safdarjung Hospital, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital & Lady Hardinge Medical College, adequate and appropriate protective gears are provided to solid waste management workers as stipulated in the COVID - 19 Vaccination guidelines released by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare who collect, sort and dispose hazardous and highly contaminated biomedical waste.

(c): 'Public Health' and 'Hospitals' being State Subject, such data is not centrally maintained.

(d) & (e): A National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 (NEGVAC) has been established, which provides guidance on all aspects of COVID-19 vaccination including prioritization of population groups, procurement and inventory management, vaccine selection, vaccine delivery and tracking mechanism etc. The NEGVAC has prioritized Health Care Workers and FrontLine Workers during initial phase of COVID-19 vaccination followed by prioritized group of persons aged 50 years and above, and those aged less than 50 years comorbidities.