

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF BIOTECHNOLOGY**

**LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 787
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23.07.2021**

Genome Sequencing of SARS Cov-2 Virus

787. SHRIMATI MALA ROY:

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्री
be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of laboratories in the country which are capable of genome sequencing of SARS COV-2 virus;
- (b) the number of cases COVID-19 reported along with the number of samples sequenced since setting up of such laboratories; and
- (c) the time by which these laboratories would achieve the target of sequencing of 5 per cent samples?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND EARTH SCIENCES
(DR. JITENDRA SINGH)**

- (a) Sir, the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) is a consortium of 28 genome sequencing laboratories of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHF&W), Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Ministry of Education, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and State Governments. The overall aim of the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium is to monitor the genomic variations in the SARS-CoV-2 in India.
- (b) As per ICMR database there are 1,88,26,913 individuals registered as Covid-19 positive between 20-12-2020 to 19-07-2021. Since the inception of INSACOG till now the INSACOG has sequenced 57,476 SARS-CoV-2 genomes. Out of these, 44,334 samples have been analyzed and assigned Pangolin lineage classification and submitted to the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) for public health correlation.
- (c) The present sampling strategy does not mandate sequencing 5% of RT-PCR positive samples. The sampling strategy is to sequence 15 samples from every sentinel site in every 15 days from each state so that districts are represented from an epidemiological point of view. This is a more diverse sampling strategy as against a random 5% sample sequencing. Also, this is a dynamic process and quantum of SARS- CoV-2 genome sequencing depends on the positivity rate, which has currently decreased. Efforts in terms of expansion of INSACOG by onboarding more institutes have also been undertaken.
