

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3445
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17TH DECEMBER, 2021**

MENTAL WELL BEING OF CHILDREN DURING COVID-19

**3445. SHRIMATI APARAJITA SARANGI:
SHRIMATI SARMISTHA SETHI:**

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware of mental health issues of children due to loss of parents, family members, economic loss in the family and education related issues caused by work-from-home and virtual education culture due to COVID-19 pandemic, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has taken any measures/initiatives/implemented schemes to encourage mental health check-ups among children and adults for mitigating mental health stigma among the masses, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether mental health is covered in various insurances offered to people in the country and if so, details thereof; and
- (d) whether the Government plans to encourage companies and employers to adopt mental health policies for a healthy work environment and if so, details thereof?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE
(DR. BHARATI PRAVIN PAWAR)**

(a): Realizing the impact that COVID-19 may have on the mental health of the people, including children, the Government has taken a number of initiatives to provide psychosocial support during COVID-19. These initiatives include:

- (i) Setting up of a 24/7 helpline 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.
- (ii) Issuance of guidelines/ advisories on management of mental health issues, catering to different segments of the society.
- (iii) Advocacy through various media platforms in the form of creative and audio-visual materials on managing stress and anxiety, and promoting an environment of support and care for all.
- (iv) Issuance of detailed guidelines by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru- "Mental Health in the times of COVID-19

Pandemic - Guidance for General Medical and Specialized Mental Health Care Settings".

- (v) 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/>)
- (vi) Online capacity building of health workers by NIMHANS in providing psychosocial support and training through (iGOT)-Diksha platform.

(b): To address the burden of mental disorders, the Government of India is supporting implementation of the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) under the National Mental Health Programme in 692 districts of the country for detection, management and treatment of mental disorders/ illness with the major components of counselling in schools and colleges, work place stress management, life skills training, suicide prevention services and IEC activities for generation of awareness and removal of stigma associated with Mental Illness. Further, funds upto Rs. 12 lakhs per annum are provided to each district supported under DMHP for targeted interventions with the following objectives:

- (i) To provide class teachers with facilitative skill to promote life skill among their students.
- (ii) To provide the class teachers with knowledge and skills to identify emotional conduct, scholastic and substance use problems in their students
- (iii) To provide class teachers with a system of referral for students with psychological problems to the District Mental Health Team for inputs and treatment.
- (iv) To involve other stakeholders like parents, community leaders to enhance development of adolescents etc.

(c): As per Section 21 (4) of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, every insurer shall make provision for medical insurance for treatment of mental illness on the same basis as is available for treatment of physical illness. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India vide order dated 16th August, 2018 has directed all insurance companies to comply with the aforesaid provision of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017.

(d): The National Mental Health Policy, 2014 provides for incorporation of programmes to assist adults in handling of stressful life circumstances in workplace policies. The workplace policies should cover those employed in the organized as well as unorganized sectors.
