

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1643
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11.02.2022**

UNDERCOUNTING OF COVID DEATHS

**†1643. SHRI RAHUL GANDHI:
SHRI GAURAV GOGOI:**

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

- (a) whether as per research published in journal Science COVID-19 deaths in India during the period from January 2020 to July 2021 was between 31 and 34 lakhs as opposed to the officially reported 4 lakh deaths, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government accepts the authenticity of its own Health Management Information System in reporting deaths by States and the Civil Registration System managed by the respective States used in gathering data for the above research;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to investigate the issue of massive undercounting of COVID-19 deaths in India and conduct a pan-India audit of COVID-19 deaths, if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the steps taken to tackle undercounting of deaths and ensure that the guidelines for classification of deaths due to post-Covid complications are being strictly followed; and
- (e) the details of COVID-19 death compensation claims filed and claims accepted as on January 1, 2022 along with the compensation paid to families of the deceased, State/UT-wise?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (e): As on 9th February 2022, as reported by States/UTs, a total of 5,05,279 deaths due to COVID-19 have been reported in the country.

The above mentioned study is speculative and make use of non-validated methodology for calculating estimates of excess mortality and lacks any peer reviewed scientific data.

India has a robust Civil Registration System (CRS) and Sample Registration System (SRS) which predates the COVID-19 pandemic and covers all States/UTs. The registration of deaths in

the country is done under Registration of Births and Deaths Act (RBD Act, 1969) by functionaries appointed by the State Governments.

In the context of COVID-19 Pandemic, detailed guidelines for reporting of deaths have been issued by Union Health Ministry to all States/UTs. Accordingly, all States/UTs report cases and deaths to Union Health Ministry on a regular basis.

Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) on 10th May 2020 issued 'Guidance for appropriate recording of COVID-19 related deaths in India' (Available at: https://www.icmr.gov.in/pdf/covid/techdoc/Guidance_appropriate_recording_of_related_deaths_India.pdf).

Union Ministry of Health & FW, vide letter dated 9th October 2020 has conveyed to States/UTs, WHO and ICMR guidelines on correct recording of COVID-19 related deaths in accordance with globally accepted ICD-10 classification and also urged states for periodic death audits with the aim to improve quality of healthcare services by suitable corrective measures. States/UTs were also provided with a proforma for carrying out death audits in this regard.

States and UTs have been advised through formal communications, multiple video conferences and through deployment of Central teams for correct recording of deaths in accordance with laid down guidelines.

In pursuance of the Hon'ble Supreme Court Judgement dated 30th June 2021, Government of India through National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued 'Guidelines to provide for ex-gratia assistance to kin of the deceased by COVID-19'. NDMA has recommended an ex-gratia amount of Rs. 50,000/- per deceased person, subject to cause of death certified as COVID-19.

The ex-gratia assistance is provided by States from State Disaster Response Funds. Distribution of such ex-gratia relief is the responsibility of the State/UT Government concerned.