

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UN-STARRED QUESTION NO.4902
TO BE ANSWERED ON 01.04.2022

MENTAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN

4902. SHRI GAURAV GOGOI:

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

- (a) whether the Ministry has studied the effects of the pandemic and continued lockdowns on the mental health of children and adolescents, if so, the details and findings thereof;
- (b) whether the Government proposes to train Anganwadi Workers to address the mental health issues at the initial stage;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken towards creating awareness and action in the field of infant mental health; and
- (d) the details of the developmental schemes meant for children and adolescents and manner in which the implementation has been adapted to suit the pandemic situation?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a) : As informed by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, a number of initiatives have been taken on the mental health of the people including children and adolescents while realizing the impact of pandemic which 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. 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.
- iii. Issuance and dissemination 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".

(b) & (c) : SAMVAD (Support, Advocacy & Mental health interventions for children in Vulnerable circumstances And Distress) – NIMHANS has developed a Training Programme on Integrating Child Protection and Mental Health Services at the community-level through Panchayat Raj Institutions, under the Mission Vatsalya

Convergence framework, and has completed training of Master Trainers which is inclusive of the vulnerability and risk issues in child protection, as created by the pandemic, aims to reach anganwadi workers too.

(d) : The Ministry of Women and Child Development is implementing a centrally sponsored scheme namely Child Protection Services (CPS) Scheme under which support is provided to States and UT Governments for delivering services for children in need of care and difficult circumstances. The Ministry also issued advisories and guidelines for encouraging COVID appropriate behaviour, monitoring of Child Care Institutions and coping strategies during COVID times for ensuring regular supply of food, water etc., to the children living in CCIs. A responsibility matrix defining role of primary duty holders at all levels from State to Panchayati Raj Institutions was also shared with States/UTs.

Anganwadi Services (under Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 Scheme) covers the children in the age group of 0-6 years, pregnant women & lactating mothers and adolescent girls in the age group of 14-18 years. Functioning of Anganwadi Centres during Covid-19 circumstances was permitted as per guidelines issued by Government for distribution of food items and nutrition support by Anganwadi Workers, once in 15 days, at the doorstep of beneficiaries, i.e., children, women and lactating mothers to ensure continuous nutritional support. Further, steps have been taken to enable delivering of essential health services including vaccination services during the COVID 19 pandemic.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development in collaboration with National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) has established a National Initiative & Integrated Resource Centre for Child Protection, Mental Health, and Psychosocial Care named "SAMVAD" (Support Advocacy & Mental Health Interventions for Children in Vulnerable Circumstances and Distress) in NIMHANS, at Bangalore. SAMVAD is working in 4 key thematic areas, namely Mental Health, Care & Protection, Education and Policy & Law. SAMVAD has conducted various training and capacity building programs and through public discourse series conducted via Virtual Knowledge Network Systems.

Further, the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has launched the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) to generate awareness among masses about mental illnesses information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities. At the District level, sufficient funds are provided to Districts under the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) under the Non-communicable Diseases flexi-pool of National Health Mission for IEC and awareness generation activities in the community, schools, workplaces, with community involvement. Under the DMHP various IEC activities such as awareness messages in local newspapers and radio, street plays, wall paintings etc. are undertaken by the State/UTs.
