

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 1188
TO BE ANSWERED ON- 25/07/2022

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON TRIBAL CHILDREN

1188. SHRI RAHUL GANDHI

Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has assessed the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Scheduled Tribes(STs) and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), particularly on their health and nutrition outcomes;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the steps taken/being taken to improve inter- ministerial coordination to address severe acute malnutrition among tribal children;
- (d) whether the Government is currently implementing programmes to improve health and nutrition outcomes for tribals in aspirational districts, especially in Wayanad Parliamentary Constituency; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof ?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRIBAL AFFAIRS
(SMT. RENUKA SINGH SARUTA)

(a) and (b): Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is the sectoral Ministry on all issues related to public health and matters relating to epidemics including tribal areas. As per information provided by MoHFW, during covid various interventions were taken for management of covid as indicated below:

(i). States/UTs are being provided required technical and financial assistance for strengthening of their healthcare system, including management of the COVID-19 public health challenge, from time to time.

(ii). Under the India COVID19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Package (COVID Package), States/UTs have been provided financial support, besides the supply of essential materials such as PPEs, N95 masks, ventilators, etc from MoHFW.

(iii). A Scheme on “India Covid-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Package - Phase-II” (ECRP-Phase-II) during 2021-22 was approved by the Cabinet on 8.07.2021 for an amount of Rs. 23,123 crores, to be implemented in 9 months from 1st July, 2021 to 31st March, 2022. The Scheme is aimed to prevent, detect and respond to the continuing threat posed by COVID-19 and strengthen national health systems for preparedness in India. The scheme is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) with some Central Sector (CS) components.

(iv). Support is provided to the States for provision for establishing District Pediatric Units (42 or 32 bedded units including Oxygen Supported beds and ICU beds) in all the Districts of the Country including the Districts with predominantly tribal population.

(v). Support is extended to create pre-fabricated structures for establishing 6 bedded units at Sub Health Centres and Primary Health Centres and 20 bedded units at Community Health Centres for meeting the requirement of hospital beds in rural, peri-urban and tribal areas.

(vi). Vaccination drive had been intensified across the country to safeguard the citizen from the fatality of COVID including tribal people. More than 200 cr vaccination doses have been provided.

(vii). An amount of Rs. 3832 crore was release to States during 2020-21 as Scheduled Tribe Component (STC). Further, an amount of Rs. 4260.20 crore has been earmarked as STC during 2021-22.

(viii). As informed by state of Kerela, The PVTG families of Kerala includes Cholanaikkans, Kattunayikkans, Kurumbar Kadar and Koraga and mainly residing at the Districts of Wayanad, Malappuram, Palakkad, Kasergode and Thrissur. During the first wave of COVID-19 pandemic, tribes of Kerala were relatively safer than the mainstream population. Till January 2021, only 2682 persons were infected by the virus and the casualty was limited to just 35. Whereas during this second wave, COVID viral spread has been severe. As on 25.06.2021, 23183 persons have been infected by the virus, 19208 have got cured, 3767 are under treatment and 4130 are under observation. So far, 208 casualties have been reported. Earlier 54 tribal settlements have been identified as high-risk clusters and now it becomes zero. At present PVTG settlements are not in high risk clusters. All the expenses for treatment of covid 19 patients of all tribal communities including PVTGs are borne by the Kerala state government under the comprehensive tribal health care.

(c): During Covid, Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA), actively coordinated with the officers in State Tribal Welfare Department, to assess the preventive and curative needs to curb the spread of COVID-19 among tribal communities and extend helping hand in meeting the urgent requirement in coordination with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Various interventions under different schemes of MoTA and Government of India are listed as under.

(i). During 2020-21, Ministry of Tribal Affairs provided funds to the tune of Rs. 5476.01 crore for various development activities including education, health, and livelihood. State Governments were advised to include proposals for meeting health related urgent requirements in view of COVID-19 in the annual plan under Article 275(1) Grants for the year 2021-22.

(ii). Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation (TRIFED) coordinated with States to resolve the problems being faced by tribal's in disposal of MFPs, quantum of MFPs available with States, strategy for procurement along with plan for storage, value addition and sale of MFP.

(iii). The PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMJKAY) was announced in March 2020, to reach out to the poorest of the poor, with food and money in hands, so that they do not face difficulties in buying essential supplies and meeting essential needs. An additional allocation of 5kg of food grains (wheat / rice), free of cost to around 80 crore National Food Security Act (NFSA) beneficiaries including tribal people.

(iv). Under POSHAN Abhiyaan Jan Andolan, or peoples' movement for improving nutrition by Ministry of WCD, MOTA is a key partner Ministry. During the recently held PoshanPakhwada in March 2022, one of the key thematic areas was focus on traditional food for healthy mother and child, especially in tribal areas. To generate greater awareness on the same, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs focused on EMRS schools by conducting activities to sensitize children on dietary changes, encouraging locally available foods, conducting awareness programs on POSHAN in schools and through parent teacher interaction, sensitizing about traditional plants that help in nutrition gain, developing nutri-gardens in EMRS schools etc.

(d) to (e): Government has adopted a multi- pronged strategy for holistic development of tribal people living across the country including Wayanad for Health, Nutrition Sanitation and Drinking Water Supply under different schemes of Government of India.

As informed by Government of Kerala, Nutritious food is provided to all pregnant women and lactating mothers, adolescent girls and infants through Anganwadi Centres. As per information provided, Government of Kerala is implementing several programmes for the overall health care of the tribal people affected by covid 19 in concert with other Department and Ministries.

- Health Care Institutions : The Scheduled Tribes Development Department is running five Allopathic outpatient clinics in the remote scheduled tribes areas of Attappady(2 clinics), Chalakudy(1 clinic) and Idduki(2 clinics). More than 24000 ST patients are being assisted annually through these OP Clinics.
- Medical Assistance through Hospitals
- Tribal Relief Fund: Financial assistance is given to STs affected by various disease and natural calamities who are below poverty line who suffer from major diseases like cancer, heart, kidney, brain ailments etc. This also includes assistance for organizing medical camps, provision of nutritious food on the advice of the doctor, cost of purchase of drugs, disaster management, accident relief etc.
- Assistance for Sickle Cell Anemia patient: ST patients of Sickle Cell Anemia are provided monthly financial assistance of Rs.2500/- per month. Patients are mostly residing in the districts of Wayanad, Palakkad, Kozhikode and Malappuram.
- Janani Janma Raksha: The scheme is envisaged for timely assistance of Rs.2000 per month for 18 months for nutritional issues of mother and child.
- Medical Units: There is 17 Ayurveda Outpatient Clinics and 01 Ayurveda Hospital that is situated at Aralam in Kanur District.
- Mobile Medical Units: The units are stationed at Nedumangad in Thiruvananthapuram District and Thodupuzha in Idukki District. 03 mobile medical units are functioning in Malappuram, Palakkad, Wayanad through HLL (Hindustan Life Care Ltd.) and 2 units functioning in Kollam and Idukki through KMSCL (Kerala Medical Services Corporation Ltd.)
- Food Support/Security Programme to address malnutrition and poverty among STs where priority is given to women and unwed mothers.
- Schemes implemented with Grant-in-aid under Article 275(1).
- Special central assistance to tribal Sub Scheme.
- ST Promoters to facilitate extension of benefits to tribal beneficiaries 1182 ST youths have been selected as ST promoters out of which 140 are working as health promoters.

- Special Programme for Adiyas, Paniyas, PVTGs and Tribes living in Forest. Emphases is given on projects relating to health, food support and economic development of these special groups.
- Engaging Committed Social Workers in Tribal Welfare.
- Community Kitchen: The Community kitchen started in Attappady and Wayanad District for enhancing nourishment of vulnerable population including pregnant and lactating mother, children, adolescents, senior citizens, chronically ill etc. The community Kitchen caters to the Irula, Muduga and Kurumba Communities. The programme ensures food to the most vulnerable communities, nutritional education of the communities, builds solidarity and NHGs among the communities to access their rights and entitlements, develops livelihood and augments income of these communities.
