

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 2457**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON- 01/08/2022

**COVID-19 ON TRIBAL COMMUNITIES**

2457. SHRI G.M. SIDDESHWAR:

Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has made an assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on tribal communities?
- (b) if so, the details thereof including the tribal population and district affected by COVID-19 in the State of Karnataka?
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the measures undertaken by the Government to address problems faced by tribal communities because of COVID-19 in Karnataka?

**ANSWER**

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

- (a) to (d):** 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.

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). 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.

(iii). 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 Poshan Pakhwada 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.

Government of Karnataka has taken measures to address problems faced by tribal communities because of COVID-19 in Karnataka. Details of such measures are below.

### **Community Engagement and Social Awareness by Gram Panchayats in respect of COVID-19 pandemic:**

- IEC activities for sanitation and hygiene were conducted with special attention for PVTGs and forest based tribes. Local resources like loud speakers mounted on autos, vans and other transport vehicles were used to spread COVID 19 awareness. Grama panchayth officials and Asha workers also visited the colonies.
- Dedicated Whatsapp groups of tribal leaders & youths were created to raise awareness about testing, vaccination, medicines, hygiene, sanitation and social distancing etc.

- Participation of resource persons from Health Department, Tribal Welfare Department, District Administration, District In charge Minister, Local MLA's and Political representatives were ensured for sensitization of communities
- 24 X 7 helpline in district control room, Taluk and Gram Panchayat level

### **Covid-19 testing and timely report:-**

RT-PCR and Rapid Antigen Detection Test (RADT) are conducted at door steps using dedicated mobile health team which is attached to near by PHCs along with Asha workers and Anganwadi workers helping to identify the symptomatic and asymptomatic PVTGs.

### **Curative Interventions:-**

- Supply covid-19 Medical kits to the Jenu Kurubas, Koraga, Soligas and other forest dwelling tribes.
- Covid-19 positive patients are shifted to nearby dedicated Covid care centres according to screening of the patients and treatment given. At Covid care centre all the facilities of N95 Mask, Hand Sanitizer, Fingertip Pulse Oximeter, Digital Thermometer, Steam Vaporiser, Spirometer, Paracetamol, Betadine for mouth wash and gargle, Multivitamin Tablets, gloves, soaps, detergent powder etc.
- Special Covid care centers opened by District Administration at EMRS and Ashrama schools. Special attention given to PVTGs and forest dwelling tribes.
- 8 Mobile Health Units have been deputed to haadis to help identify the COVID-19 symptomatic and asymptomatic patients among PVTGs and forest dwelling tribes.

### **COVID-19 Vaccination measures:**

- Special vaccination drive for PVTGs and Other Forest Dwelling Tribes has been taken up by dedicated team including Anganwadi/ Asha workers on the spot COWIN registration and vaccination done.
- The Vaccine Hesitancy among the forest dwelling tribes, including Jenu kuruba & Koraga (PVTGs in Karnataka) was mitigated through discussions with tribal leaders regarding importance of vaccination. Things are now in place for vaccinating the tribals mainly Jenu Kurubas, Koraga, Soligas and other forest dwelling tribes.
- The district administration has converted the Tribal Ashrama Schools into Vaccination Centres as it is easier to cover the Haadis (hamlets).

**Other measures to ensure health & nutrition:**

- **Nutrition program:-** To improve the health condition under nutrition food scheme, PVTG and Other Forest Dwelling Tribes families are provided with supplementary nutrition through Anganwadi workers 6 times a year along with PDS ration:

Sl.No.	Items	Quantity
1	Rice	8 Kgs
2	Turdal	3 Kgs
3	Bengalgram	1 Kg
4	Groundnut seed	1 Kg
5	Alasande gram	1 Kg
6	Horse gram	1 Kg
7	Greengram	1 Kg
8	Sugar	1 Kg
9	Jaggery	1 Kg
10	Egg	30 No's
11	Cooking oil (saffola)	2 ltrs
12	Nandini ghee	½ Kg

- Women and Child Department is providing food kits to malnourished children, lactating and pregnant women belonging to the PVTGs and also distributing of food grains for the student of Asharama Schools who have studied in 2020-21 academic year.

Sl. No.	Community	No. of Families	Expenditure for one time (Rs. in lakhs)
1.	Jenukuruba	11858	199.61
2.	Koraga	3843	66.56
3.	Other Forest Dwelling Tribes.	30817	524.72
	<b>Total</b>	<b>46518</b>	<b>790.89</b>

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