

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

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1696
TO BE ANSWERED ON 9TH MARCH, 2021**

COVID-19 HELPLINES FOR MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE

1696 SHRI ELAMARAM KAREEM:

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

- (a) the number of helplines that were set up by Government between April 1, 2020 and September 1, 2020 to provide counselling/assistance to persons undergoing severe mental strain as a fall out of the pandemic and lockdown
- (b) whether provisions have been made to make them accessible for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons thereof and
- (c) whether any COVID-19 mental health isolation ward facilities have been set up in the states, if so, the details thereof, and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)**

(a): Centre for Psychosocial Support in Disaster Management, NIMHANS, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare had initiated a nationwide toll free 24 x 7 helpline (080-4611 0007) on 29 March 2020 to address the mental health and psychosocial concern of the public during pandemic and lock down. As on 27 February 2021 this helpline has received 3,37,556 calls and provided 53,081 individuals with specific assistance/ interventions.

The other two Central Mental Health Institutions namely Lokopriya Gopinath Bordoloi Regional Institute of Mental Health (LGBRIMH), Tezpur and Central Institute of Psychiatry (CIP), Ranchi along with various States/UTs are now also on-board to extend such services in regional/ local languages. In addition, LGBRIMH, Tezpur has also started 2 more helplines for providing assistance in therapeutic counselling and psychotherapy.

A Mental Health Rehabilitation Helpline “KIRAN” (1800-500-0019) has been launched by Ministry for Social Justice and Empowerment. This toll-free helpline in 13 languages is operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The helpline is served by 660 clinical / rehabilitation psychologists and 668 psychiatrists. The objectives of the helpline are early screening; first aid; psychological support; distress management; mental well-being; preventing deviant behaviors; psychological crisis management and referral to mental health experts.

(b): No provisions have been made to the helpline accessible for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. However, various guidelines, advisories and advocacy material on mental health issues have been developed for different segments of the society, which may be accessed on the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare website under “Behavioural Health – Psychosocial helpline” (<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>).

Institutions like All India Institute of Speech and Hearing, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare used social media platforms like Whatsapp during the COVID pandemic to provide the counselling to the caregivers of Children with communication disorders such as hard of hearing, intellectual disorder, cerebral palsy and multiple disabilities. Videos on counselling and other issues were also uploaded in the social media by the faculties. In social-media subtitles were also provided for the benefit of people with hearing problems.

(c): NIMHANS, Bengaluru, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare had set up an exclusive isolation ward for people with mental illness and neurological problems who developed COVID-19 infection. This ward was set up on 13 July 2020. This ward (till date 26 February 2021) has served 72 patients. Whenever COVID-19 severity worsened they were referred to appropriate designated COVID-19 hospitals.