



Parliamentary Committee on Management of Covid-19

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Why in News

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs on the management of the Covid-19 pandemic in the country, has recently submitted its report.

Key Points

- The Committee has made a detailed assessment of **four aspects**:
 - Preparedness,
 - Augmentation of Health Infrastructure,
 - Social Impact, and
 - Economic Impact.
- **Preparedness:**
 - **Issues:**

Migrant labourers, factory workers, daily wage earners were the worst affected due to **lack of timely dissemination of the information** in the district areas about the arrangements being made for food, shelter and other facilities leading to their exodus.
 - **Solutions:**
 - Draw up a national plan and guidelines under **National Disaster Management Act 2005** and **Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897**.
 - A **separate wing** shall be formed in the NDMA that will specialise in handling pandemics like Covid-19 and take a **leading role in building a partnership of government** with the public sector, corporates, **NGOs** and other stakeholders.
 - An **effective functional institutional mechanism** is needed for coordination between the Centre, states, and Union Territories for quick response to such a crisis in future.

- **Augmentation Health Infrastructure:**

- **Issue:**

- **Disproportionate** availability of **ICU beds** in private and public sector hospitals.
 - Private hospitals are either **inaccessible** or not **affordable** for everyone.
Overcharging by hospitals, denial of the cashless facility, variation in levying charges towards consumables such as PPE kits, gloves, and masks, etc., or on other non-medical expenditure.

- **Solution:**

- Comprehensive **Public health Act** at the **national level:**

- To support the Government in keeping **checks and controls over the private hospitals.**
 - Keep a check on the **black marketing of medicines** and ensure product standardization.
 - **Regulatory oversight** on all hospitals working in the country to prevent refusal to accept insurance claims.
 - The target should be to make Covid-19 treatment cashless for all people that are having **insurance coverage.**

- **Social Impact:**

- **Issues:**

- Ineffective implementation of the **Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Services) Act, 1979.**

- The task of **identifying the location and disbursing relief measures** to the migrant workers became **very difficult** as the Central Government did not have any data of the migrant workers and had to seek it from the States.

- **Solutions:**

- A **national database on migrant workers** be launched at the earliest helping in identification as well as delivering rations and other benefits.

- The database may also include “**records of returning migrant labourers including details about their source and destination, earlier employment details and the nature of their skills.**

- This would “**help in skill development and planning for the transit of migrant workers**” in a similar emergency in the future.

- It recommended that until the **One Nation, One Ration Card** is implemented in all states/UTs, inter-state operability of ration cards should be allowed.

- **Continuation of Mid-Day Meal Scheme.**

- Ensure that the local administrations are delivering the **rations/allowances in time** and this should be continued **until the schools reopen.**

- **Economic Impact:**

- **Issues:**

- Poor Implementation of Government Schemes.

- Delay in Loan Disbursal.

- Consumption had been severely curtailed due to huge job losses and fall in income due to the lockdown.

- **Solutions:**

- More interventions and schemes required to support the **recovery and to sustain this economic revival** especially for the **MSME** (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises).

Parliamentary Committees

Broadly, parliamentary committees are of two kinds: **Standing Committees** and **Ad Hoc Committees**.

- **Standing Committees : Permanent** (constituted every year or periodically) and work on a **continuous basis**. They can be categorized into following broad groups:
 - Financial Committees
 - Departmental Standing Committees (24)
 - Committees to Inquire
 - Committees to Scrutinise and Control
 - Committees Relating to the Day-to-Day Business of the House
 - House-Keeping Committees or Service Committees
- **Ad Hoc Committees:** Ad hoc committees are temporary and cease to exist on completion of the task assigned to them.

Source:IE