

Standing Committee submits report on the management of COVID-19

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In news

The Standing Committee on Home Affairs submitted its report on the management of the COVID-19 pandemic

Key recommendations of the Committee include:

Preparedness:

- The Committee noted that the sudden imposition of the lockdown caused an **unprecedented economic disruption**.
- It also **caused fear and anxiety among migrant workers** leading to large scale movement of migrants back to their home states.
- **To address such a crisis in the future, the Committee recommended framing a national plan and guidelines under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897.**

Health infrastructure:

- The Committee noted that the central and state governments incurred heavy expenditure on COVID-19 treatment.
- It noted the need for a strong public healthcare system to deal with such shocks.
- Therefore, it recommended greater investment in health infrastructure to scale up public health services and increasing budgetary allocation to public hospitals.

Vaccines:

- The Committee recommended that while undertaking vaccine trials, all mandatory requirements must be fulfilled, and all phases of the trial must be completed.
- The Committee noted that emergency use authorisation should only be used in the rarest of rare cases.

Data collection:

- The Committee noted that a study is needed to understand the patterns in test rate, recovery and fatality rate.
- It also recommended that relevant data should be made publicly available to the research community to provide inputs for COVID-19 management, and to provide real-time solutions to control the pandemic.
- Such disclosure should follow principles of data anonymisation, security and privacy laws.

Malpractices:

- The Committee noted reports of private hospitals selling beds for treatment and black-marketing and overpricing of certain medicines.
- It recommended a comprehensive national public health Act to keep a check on private hospitals and black-marketing, and creating awareness campaigns on availability of cheaper and effective repurposed medicines.

Social impact :

- To address the social impact of COVID-19 on the poor, the Committee recommended that a national database on migrant workers be launched at the earliest to help in their identification and to ensure delivery of rations and benefits to them.

Food distribution:

- The Committee recommended that until all states implement One Nation One Ration card, inter-state

operability of ration cards must be allowed.

Economic impact :

- The Committee observed that MSMEs were very adversely affected during the pandemic.
- It noted the need to support MSMEs with dire working capital requirements to sustain the impact of COVID-19.