

ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ತುಣುಕುಗಳು
PAPER CLIPPINGS

(20)

Parliamentary Committee

ಇಲಾಖೆ / ವಿಷಯ : DEPARTMENT / SUBJECT:

ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: The Hindu

ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE 19/12/20

Parliamentary panel calls for migrant workers' database

It wants overhaul of archaic Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

A national database of migrant workers should be collated at the earliest to ensure that if ever there is a repeat of a COVID-19-like pandemic, the relief measures should reach the intended beneficiaries, the Standing Committee on Home Affairs has noted in its report. The committee also recommended an urgent review of the 123-year-old Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897.

The committee, headed by senior Congress leader Anand Sharma, unanimously adopted the report "Management of COVID-19 pandemic and related issues" at a meeting on Friday. It noted that during the extended lockdown, the task of identifying the location and disbursing relief measures to the migrant workers became difficult as the Central government did not have any data of the migrant workers.

"In the absence of a comprehensive national database, it is difficult to extend the relief measures by the government to the intended beneficiaries," the committee report said. The data-



Migrants on their way to their home States, in A.P. earlier this year. ■ V. RAJU

base, as per the committee, should have details of the source State, the destination State, skill set of the worker and other contact details.

Many members at Friday's meeting noted that this pandemic might not be the last one to hit the country and the government should not depend on international trends to tackle it. The Disaster Management Act, 2005, and the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 – the two guiding laws during the pandemic – are insufficient, the committee has said.

The Home Ministry is already reviewing the provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2005. The committee has recommend-

ed that a similar effort needs to be made for the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897.

Ancient provisions

"The Committee observes that the provisions of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, have helped in managing COVID-19 but this Act is outdated as it was framed in the colonial era, which was even well before the Spanish flu of 1918. Therefore, the committee recommends that the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, should be revisited updated and amended so that it is fully equipped to respond to the challenges posed by the an anticipated onset of the pandemic in the future," the report noted.

The committee said that the incoming international passengers who entered throughout March 2020 were screened only for high temperature. "Thus, asymptomatic patients as also those who travel after taking medicines for controlling temperature could not be diagnosed at the time when they could practically be the only source of infections of COVID-19 in the country," the report said.