

**17– 09 – 2023**

- News: Can PM CARES' benefits be extended to all orphans: SC
- The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Centre whether benefits given under PM CARES Fund to children orphaned in the COVID pandemic can be extended to other parentless children.

## **PM CARES for Children**

- The PM CARES for Children scheme was launched with an aim to support children **who have lost both parents or their lone surviving parent or their legal guardian or adoptive parent due to Covid-19** by supporting them with a **corpus of 10 lakh**.
- There are a total **577 Covid-19 orphans** identified across the country. Also, there has been a rise in cases of child trafficking.
- The status of children in need of care and protection included orphans (10,094), lost either parent (1, 36,910) and abandoned (488) taking the total to **1, 47,492**.
- In the gender-wise break-up, out of the 1, 47,492 children, there are **76,508 boys, 70,980 girls and four transgenders**.

- This corpus will be used to give a **monthly stipend from 18 years of their age, for the next five years and on reaching the age of 23 years, he or she will get the corpus amount as one lump-sum** for personal and professional use.
- The education expenses of younger children will be supported by way of admission to **Kendriya Vidyalayas** and private schools up to higher secondary level.
- These children will also be **supported during their higher education through either a scholarship equivalent to the tuition fees or educational loans where the interest on the loan will be paid by the PM – CARES fund.**
- All children will be **enrolled as a beneficiary under Ayushman Bharat Scheme** with a health insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakhs.
- The **premium amount will be paid by PM-CARES till a child turns 18.**
- Recently, Union Women and Child Development Ministry has launched a web-based portal to facilitate submission of applications, identification of children eligible to receive support under the 'PM CARES for Children' scheme.
- The web portal is **[www.pmcaresforchildren.in](http://www.pmcaresforchildren.in)**.
- **Earlier, the Ministry had asked the Chief Secretaries of all States and Administrators of all Union Territories, to direct the District Magistrates in their States to identify the children eligible** for receiving support under the 'PM CARES for Children' scheme.

- A **dedicated Help desk** has been set up for the purpose which is accessible by telephone at 011-23388074 or by email [pmcares-children.wcd@nic.in](mailto:pmcares-children.wcd@nic.in).

## **PM-CARES Fund**

- The government has set up the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM-CARES Fund) to **deal with any kind of emergency or distress situation like posed by the Covid-19 pandemic**.
- The Fund is a **public charitable trust with the Prime Minister as its Chairman**. Other Members include Defence Minister, Home Minister and Finance Minister.
- The Fund **enables micro-donations** because of which a large number of people will be able to contribute with the **smallest of denominations**.
- It will **strengthen disaster management capacities** and encourage research on protecting citizens.
- Contribution to PM - CARES Fund **qualifies as CSR** (Corporate Social Responsibility) Expenditure.
- The Fund is **out of the ambit of Right to Information Act, 2005**.