

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation praises UP govt for 'better Covid management'

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LUCKNOW: A delegation from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation met chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday to discuss further cooperation between the state and the non-profit in the fields of health, nutrition and agriculture.

Foundation's CEO Marx Suzman said that the organisation has worked in several countries and seen the Covid management across the world and "it would be appropriate to say that India, especially UP, managed Covid better than the one seen in the US".

A government spokesperson said that the delegation and government, led by the CM, discussed the sectors of health, nutrition and agriculture and how they could increase technical assistance in these.

Thanking the Foundation for its cooperation in several sectors, the CM said that the non-profit has made commendable contributions in the fields of health and nutrition. "The Foundation has always aided the government in taking its various schemes among the people and making them effective. The National Family Health Survey-5 has shown that in the sectors of health and nutrition, UP has recorded historic improvement. On several parameters, UP's position is better than the national average. In this work too, we have received cooperation from the Foundation," he said.

Yogi Adityanath said that even during Covid-19, the Foundation supported the state government by making testing kits available and establishing dedicated Covid hospitals in Gautam Buddha Nagar, Gonda and Prayagraj districts. In the recent years, he added, UP had made incredible achievements in the field of health and nutrition. In the past 40 years, encephalitis took the lives of several children, but now the government has managed to contain the infection by 95%, he said, adding that in managing illnesses like encephalitis, other water-borne diseases and Covid, the state government has received support from international organisations, like UNICEF, WHO and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Highlighting sectors where the Foundation could still provide assistance to the government, the CM said: "There is still a lot to be achieved in the sector of health. On the lines of 'one district-one product', the state government is setting up 'one medical college-one district'. This will lead to sufficient availability of health services and doctors in the state. However, the availability of skilled nursing and paramedical staff remains a challenge for the state government. In preparing a team of professional and skilled nursing and paramedical staff, the Foundation can provide assistance to the government."

He said that there is massive potential for improvement in the agriculture sector as well. UP is blessed with major sources of water and fertile land. In the past five years, the state has made technical improvements in the field and promoted crop diversification. Krishi Vigyan Kendra has been established in the state while the agriculture university is equipped with sufficient amenities, he said, but added that even with all these achievements, the Foundation's experience will prove to be useful for the state in connecting farmers with technique, training them, research etc. He said that the Foundation can further assist the state government in strengthening self-help groups.