

(b) Yes, Sir. A Public Grievances Committee, headed by a Superintendent, was set up in Passport Office, Bangalore w.e.f. 1st May, 1997. The committee meets between 2.30 PM and 5.15 PM on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday each month wherein the grievances of the public are attended to. A Complaint/Grievances Box is also placed in the public area. In any case, the Passport Officer meets the public every day for day to day disposal of grievances. The Committee was meant as a supplementary institutional mechanism for grievance redressal.

(c) Only 4 complaints have been received so far, mainly, relating to delay in issue of passports. In all these cases, passports were issued after completion of documents.

(d) No, Sir. However, a few verbal complaints were received about the Impolite behaviour to the Karnataka State Police Security Guards who have since been changed.

(e) The Committee has now been upgraded to a Public Grievances Cell in the Passport Office to exclusively deal with the complaints received from the public wherein such complaints and the grievances of the public will be dealt with on a day to day basis.

Pending Cases in Labour Courts

28. SHRI VIJAY PATEL:

SHRI SARAT PATTANAYAK:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases pending in Labour Courts and High Courts concerning labour disputes in the country, particularly, in Gujarat;

(b) the steps taken to expedite settlement of pending cases;

(c) whether a number of vacancies of Presiding Judges exists in the State of Gujarat;

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps Government propose to take to fill up these vacancies; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI M.P. VEERENDRA KUMAR): (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Oral Cancer

29. SHRI K.P. SINGH DEO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the alarming rise in the cases of oral cancer in the country;

(b) if so, the number of patients suffering from oral cancer detected during last one year as compared to that in the previous year;

(c) the reasons for rise in the cases; and

(d) the details of steps taken to provide proper treatment to the patients who are suffering from oral cancer?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) to (c) According to the five urban population based cancer registries (Mumbai, Bangalore, Madras, Delhi and Bhopal) functioning under NCRP of ICMR for the last one decade, the oral cancers have been more or less stable except for men at Madras which have shown a slight increase. Tobacco chewing is one of most important cause of oral cancer. The changes in a occurrence of oral cancer are expected to reflect the change in tobacco habits. The number of cases of oral cancer during 1995 were 52,489 which have shown a slight increase to 53,400 in 1996.

(d) Under the NCCP the Government has started schemes mentioned below for early detection, creating awareness and treatment of cancer.

- (i) Augmentation of Regional Cancer Centres in various States/UTs.
- (ii) Development of Oncology wings in identified Medical Colleges/Hospitals,
- (iii) Setting up of Cobalt Therapy facilities in various parts of the country,
- (iv) District Cancer Control Project,
- (v) Financial assistance to NGOs for early detection and awareness activities.

Indo-Pak Talks

30. SHRI PARASRAM BHARDWAJ:

SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Pakistan will have to vacate POK" appearing in 'Times of India' dated June 26, 1997 wherein Pakistan Prime Minister had recognised Kashmir as a disputed territory for the first time during the just-concluded foreign secretary level talks between the two countries in Islamabad;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(c) whether Indian Government has made clarification in this regard that our views on Jammu and Kashmir are very clear that Pakistan will have to vacate the Pakistan occupied Kashmir?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMALA SINHA): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) The entire State of Jammu & Kashmir is an integral part of the Indian Union. The issue which remains to be resolved is the vacaton of the territory of the State of Jammu & Kashmir which is under Pakistan's illegal and forcible occupation. India's position on Jammu & Kashmir was conveyed to Pakistan during the Foreign Secretary level talks held in Islamabad from 19-23 June, 1997. The position was also reiterated by the Indian Foreign Secretary during his press conference in New Delhi on 25 June, 1997.

Unauthorised Occupation

31. DR. BALIRAM: Will the Minister of URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 804 dated February 26, 1997 and state:

(a) whether the information has since been collected;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF URBAN AFFAIRS AND EMPLOYMENT (DR. U. VENKATESWARLU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Leprosy

32. SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated number of leprosy patients in the country at present;

(b) whether there is an increase in the incidence of leprosy patients during the last three years;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the details of measures taken by the Government to check this disease;

(e) whether the Government have also launched any special rehabilitation programmes for these patients; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) The estimated number of cases in the country at present is 0.68 million.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) National Leprosy Eradication Programme is being implemented as a 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme in all States/UTs with an aim to achieve elimination of leprosy as a Public Health Problem by the year 2000. All the 490

districts in the country have been sanctioned Multi Drug Therapy (MDT) Scheme for free treatment services to all the leprosy patients. Community awareness is being increased through information, education and communication activities. Continuous contact survey, School survey and sample survey are being carried out for early detection of leprosy. Special action project for elimination of leprosy has been developed for difficult to reach and inaccessible areas.

(e) and (f) Under the National Leprosy Eradication Programme Services are provided for (i) Medical correction of disabilities, (ii) Physiotherapy services, (iii) Prosthetics and appliances, (iv) Care of hands, eye and feet (v) Care of leprosy ulcer. Deformity and ulcer care services are being strengthened.

Reconstructive surgery for the deformity which are correctable are being done at selected centres at present which are proposed to be strengthened further.

Economic and vocational Rehabilitation is done by Ministry of Welfare.

Financial Assistance through Minister's Discretionary Grant

33. SHRI RAMASHRAYA PRASAD SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received complaints from various States particularly from Andhra Pradesh relating to provision of financial assistance from the Minister's discretionary grant to the needy patients during the current year;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have taken any action on these complaints;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

Female Circumcision

34. SHRI DILEEP SANGHANI:

SHRIMATI BHAVNA BEN DEVRAJ BHAI CHIKHALIA:

SHRIMATI SHEILA GAUTAM

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to the State of World Population Report 1997 brought out by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) stating that "some minority groups in India" are reported to have undergone some form of female circumcision;