

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:306
ANSWERED ON:13.12.2006
SPREADING AWARENESS OF HIV/AIDS IN RURAL AREAS
Singh Shri Uday

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) Whether only 36% of rural women are aware of HIV/AIDS as per a survey conducted by UNICEF as reported in the Statesman dated September 12, 2006;
- (b) If so, the facts of the matter reported therein ;
- (c) Whether the Government proposes to spread awareness regarding HIV/AIDS programme in the rural areas of the country;
- (d) If so, the details thereof ;
- (e) Whether the rural people have also started becoming victims of HIV/AIDS ;
- (f) If so, the reasons therefor; and
- (g) The strategies formulated to check spread of HIV/AIDS particularly in the rural areas of the country ?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a)to(g) : A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 306 FOR 13TH DECEMBER, 2006

For obtaining information regarding schooling, educational attainment of children particularly girls, sanitation, hygiene, water supply, child protection and HIV/AIDS, UNICEF provided financial assistance to the National Sample Survey Organization to undertake a household survey in 43 districts spread over 14 States in the country. The survey was carried out during March – May, 2005, but the reports are yet to be finalized. However, preliminary reports do suggest that only 36.7 per cent of the women in the age group of 15-49 years have heard of HIV/AIDS.

In 2006, a behavioural surveillance Survey (BSS) was undertaken by NACO covering about one lakh respondents throughout the country. Based on this survey, awareness of HIV/AIDS among women in rural areas is estimated to be 74.7 per cent. The reliability of the BSS is much higher as the survey is focused on HIV and related issues as compared to the UNICEF funded survey that covered a large number of the development issues, with only a few questions related to HIV.

Trends as ascertained from sentinel surveillance studies clearly show that there has been a gradual increase in the HIV infection among rural population with current estimation showing 58.7 per cent of the 52 lakh infected with HIV/AIDS in rural areas as compared to 29.2 percent in 2002. As 86% of the transmission is through the sexual route, the main reason for the spread of this infection into rural areas is due to unprotected sexual behaviour of migrant workers and truckers transmitting this infection from high prevalent areas and high risk population to low prevalence areas and low risk groups.

In order to check the spread of HIV/AIDS, the Government of India is implementing the National AIDS Control Programme as a 100% centrally sponsored scheme. The strategy is based primarily on preventing new infections by focused interventions among high risk groups such as commercial sex workers, Injectable drug users, Men having sex with men, Truckers, Migrant Labours etc., and also providing care support and treatment to the HIV infected persons. In view of the increase of HIV infection in rural areas, there is much greater focus to increasing awareness on HIV/AIDS among rural populations through mass media channels, namely, TV and radio, as well as, through inter-personal communication by involving self-help groups, Anganwadi workers, the Directorate of Field Publicity and Song and Drama Division, Nehru Yuvak Kendra of the Ministry of Youth Affairs, etc.