

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3294

ANSWERED ON:05.08.2016

Blindness

Shetty Shri Gopal Chinayya

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

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

- (a) whether India is one of the countries worst affected by blindness;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) the number of visually impaired persons in the country, particularly in the rural areas, State/UT-wise;
- (d) the funds allocated and spent to deal with blindness during each of the last three years and the current year, State/UT-wise; and
- (e) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to check the rising number of cases of blindness in the country?

Answer

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE

(SMT. ANUPRIYA PATEL)

(a) & (b): As per the WHO Global Data on Visual Impairments 2010, China accounts for 20.9% and India 20.5% of the total blindness in the classified 8 WHO regions. As per the Rapid Survey on avoidable blindness (RAAB) conducted under the National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB), the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, during the year 2006-07, the prevalence of blindness in India was found to be 1%. The reasons of blindness are:

1. Cataract 62%
2. Refractive Errors 23%
3. Glaucoma 5%
4. Retinal disorder 5%
5. Others 10%

However, around 85% of this is treatable through medical and surgical interventions.

Contdâ€¦â€¦.

-2-

(c): The details of estimated visually impaired persons in the country including rural areas, State/UT-wise, is at Annexure-I.

(d): The details of financial assistance provided to States/UTs during Financial Year (FY) 2013-14 and 2014-15 is at Annexure-II-A. From FY 2015-16 onwards, five Programmes i.e. National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB), National Mental Health Programme (NMHP), National Programme for Health Care of Elderly (NPHCE), National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) & National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancers, Diabetes Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS) have been merged into Flexible Pool for Non-Communicable Diseases to improve the operational flexibility of the States/UTs. Accordingly, information related to allocation, release and expenditure under NCD Flexible Pool under National Health Mission (NHM) during the FY 2015-16 and 2016-17 is at Annexure-II- B.

(e): The following steps have been taken under NPCB to check the rising number of cases of blindness in the country:

- i) Decentralized implementation of NPCB through State/District Health Societies for close monitoring and supervision;
- ii) Reduction in the backlog of blind persons by active screening of population above 50 years, organizing eye screening camps and transporting operable cases to fixed eye-care facilities for operation/treatment;
- iii) Provision for free cataract operations through Government and Non-Government Organization (NGO) Eye Hospitals;
- iv) Provision for treatment of other eye diseases like, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma management, laser techniques, corneal transplantation, vitreo-retinal surgery, treatment of childhood blindness etc. as new initiatives;
- v) Involvement of private practitioners in eye care services;
- vi) Screening of children for identification and treatment of refractive errors and distribution of free spectacles to those suffering from refractive errors under School Eye Screening Programme;
- vii) Screening and distribution of free spectacles to elderly population suffering for presbyopia;
- viii) Collection of donated eyes for corneal transplantation;
- ix) In-service training to eye surgeons in various fields of ophthalmology to refresh and develop skills;

- x) Strengthening/developing of eye-care infrastructure at various levels to improve quantity and quality of eye-care services;
- xi) Provision for setting up Multipurpose District Mobile ophthalmic Units in District Hospitals to improve coverage area.