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Title: Regarding complete elimination of Leprosy .

SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB (CUTTACK): Hon. Speaker, Sir, a week back we celebrated the World Leprosy Eradication Day. That was the Martyrdom Day of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, which we have been observing for more than 60 years in our country.

One of the oldest diseases that is known to mankind is leprosy and it continues to be a major public health concern in India, despite significant developments in management strategies. India accounts for more than 50 per cent, or to be specific, around 60 per cent of leprosy burden worldwide. The other high burden countries include Brazil and Indonesia. The National Leprosy Control Programme was launched by the Union Government in 1955 to treat and control the transmission of the disease. In 1983, the National Leprosy Eradication Programme was launched as a Centrally Sponsored Health Scheme under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. There is no doubt that significant success was achieved; since the introduction of MDT, 16 million cases of leprosy have been treated and four million deformities have been prevented till now. The Government has achieved the goal for elimination of leprosy, but funds have been diverted from the leprosy control programme to programmes for controlling other diseases despite the fact that elimination of leprosy is an unfinished business till today in four States like Bihar, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and three Union Territories like Lakshadweep, Chandigarh and Dadra & Nagar Haveli.

I would, therefore, urge upon the Government to take urgent steps to achieve the goal of elimination of leprosy in real terms across the country. There is also a need to educate people by health professionals, social workers and the media to remove the stigma associated with this disease in our country.

माननीय अध्यक्ष:

श्री कुलदीप राय शर्मा,

डॉ. किरिट पी. सोलंकी,

श्री उदय प्रताप सिंह,

डॉ. निशिकांत दुबे एवं

श्री एस.सी. उदासी को श्री भर्तृहरि महताब द्वारा उठाए गए विषय के साथ संबद्ध करने की अनुमति प्रदान की जाती है ।

श्री धैर्यशील संभाजीराव माणे – उपस्थित नहीं ।