

[Translation]

**National Blindness Control Programme**

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\*503. SHRI D.P. YADAV :

SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT :

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

(a) whether any scheme has been prepared by the Government to make the National Blindness Control Programme more effective;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the target fixed for this purpose; and

(d) the funds sanctioned by the Government under this Programme ?

[English]

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA):  
(a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha.

**Statement**

(a) and (b) The on-going National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB) is being made more effective by proposing changes in the implementation strategies. The proposed changes involve:-

- 1) Strengthening of Medical Colleges and District Hospitals for intraocular lens implants.
- 2) Setting up of a Mobile Eye Care Units in each District
- 3) Upgradation of Sub-district Hospitals/Community Health Centres for eye care.
- 4) Assistance of NGOs for setting up/expanding eye care units in voluntary sector in rural and remote areas.
- 5) Revamping scheme of assistance to eye banks and promoting eye donation.
- 6) Expanding School eye screening Programme.
- 7) Implementing Need based health education activities.

(c) It is proposed to conduct 175 lakhs Cataract Operations during the IX Plan (1997-2002)

(d) An outlay of Rs.550 crores have been made for

National Programme for Control of Blindness for IX Plan.

[English]

SHRI R. L. JALAPPA) : On behalf of my colleague, Shri Saleem Iqbal Shervani, I place the answers to Q. Nos. 502 and 503 on the Table of the House. Q. Nos. 502 and 503 are identical. Therefore, I suggest that you can take up both these questions together.

MR. SPEAKER : Yes, Q. Nos. 502 and 503 are identical. We can take them up together

[Translation]

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, before asking my question, I would like to say that our Ministers go abroad during the session period, such practice should be stopped. Today Jalappaji is replying to these questions and at the time of taking decision some other person will be given charge. I would like to say that portfolio of Ministers should be decided . . . (Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER : Reply is given by the Government.

(Interruptions).

SHRI RAJIVE PRATAP RUDY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, what will be the fate of our questions if Ministers go abroad during the session period . . . (Interruptions).

SHRI ILIYAS AZMI : There may be urgency and one can go for one or two day but how the Government can function smoothly if Ministers go abroad for 10 or 15 days during the Parliament Session. Some rules should be formulated so that no one can go for more than two days . . . (Interruptions).

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Not allowed.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the reply given by the hon. Minister reveals that officials of his department have briefed him very well. He has said that there are 42 million blind persons in the world and 12 million of them are Indians. Sir, I had some figures on this subject which were taken from the survey conducted by W.H.O between 1986-1989. Now it is 1997 and hon. Minister is still referring to figures of 1986. My second question is in this context :

[English]

Whether it is a fact that in Bihar and the Eastern States, there is the largest percentage of blind people. The abrupt answer is 'No'.

[Translation]

The abrupt reply given to my question is 'No Sir', whereas no survey has been conducted after the survey of 1986-89. Whether Bihar and the eastern states have the largest number of blinds in the country? Reply to this question is also 'No Sir'. I could not understand how he said this . . . (Interruptions).

[English]

How do they know that the number of blind people in this country has increased ?

[Translation]

It is an important question. As per the reply given by the hon Minister there are one million blinds in Bihar, 2 million blinds in Uttar Pradesh and 0.5 million blinds in Orissa. As per the Starred question No 314 of 1993, the number of blind persons have not increased in the country. The Government had taken a decision five years back that:

[English]

To reduce the percentage of blindness from 1.49 percent to 0.3 percent by 2000 A.D. and to achieve this target, they should perform at least 25 to 30 lakh contract operations every year.

[Translation]

The Government has fixed a target to bring down blindness to 0.3 percent. In this context I would like to know about the the percentage of increase in the number of blind people. Please tell me the target fixed for 1996-97 under the programme for to control blindness and the percentage reduction in blindness ?

[English]

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA : Sir, we have got these figures from the Ministry. I do not know from where they got the figures. A survey was conducted in 1989. No fresh survey has yet been conducted . . . (Interruptions) According to this survey, in respect of Jammu and Kashmir, the figure is 280 lakh. In respect of Rajasthan, it is 224 lakh. In respect of Goa, it is 203 lakh. In respect of Tamil Nadu, it is 265 lakh. In respect of Uttar Pradesh, it is 158 lakh and in respect of Bihar, it is 128 lakh. So, this means that Bihar is not the State which has got the highest number of blind persons. The lowest rates are in respect of Sikkim, Meghalaya and Nagaland. Un those States, the incidence is the lowest.

As far as the expenditure incurred and the targets achieved during the last three to four years are concerned,

I would like to state that in 1993-94, we had conducted 1.9 million operations spending about Rs. 19.70 crore. In 1994-95, 2.16 million operations were conducted and the expenditure was Rs. 37.25 crore. In 1995-96, 2.47 million people were operated upon and the expenditure was Rs. 54.95 crore. In 1996-97, up to February, we had conducted 2.55 million operations and the expenditure was Rs. 59.50 crore. So, the magnitude of this problem is too much. Through 12 million operation have to be conducted now. that is, 12 million people and the operations have to be conducted on 20 million eyes, yet every year only two million are being included. We do not have so many doctors with us because we have only 8,000 doctors including the Government doctors and the doctors working under the NGOs. We are trying our best to see that at least this backlog as cleared is early as possible.

[Translation]

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are 12 million blinds in our country and about 70 million people are above the age of 60 years and gradually losing their eye-sight. This is the position of those states where there is more poverty, malnutrition and lack the facility of electricity. Seven states were chosen for 'Cataract Blindness Control Project' under the World Bank scheme which includes Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu but Bihar was not included. Sir, I would like to know that in view of poverty, malnutrition and economic problems prevailing in Bihar, will the hon. Minister formulate any scheme for controlling blindness in Bihar? In the same way whether the Government propose to set up a national hospital for blind to control blindness in western part of Uttar Pradesh?

[English]

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA : Sir, a survey was conducted by the World Bank in these seven states . . . (Interruptions).

[Translation]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Mishraji is laughing desirively on Government's attitude towards the problem of blindness in Bihar.

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : Eye-sight of people of Bihar becomes sharp during night . . . (Interruptions).

[English]

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA : Everybody is now thinking of Bihar, Sir . . . (Interruptions).

The World Bank had conducted a survey in these

seven States and they have been an assistance of Rs. 554 crore. Unfortunately, Bihar is not included in these seven States. But we are doing our best to improve the conditions in Bihar also. Last year, we could not give anything because there was no claim during that year.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY : The poor people of Bihar shall remain blind. . . .

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA : This has to be done through the State Government and the NGOs. They must come forward.

Now, when you have brought it to our notice, we ourselves will go and attend to these things.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY : I would like to ask about the specific proposals for establishing a National Hospital for the Blind in the eastern States or Bihar . . . (Interruptions). I have just requested the hon. Minister to respond to a particular query.

MR. SPEAKER : There are two more people who are listed. I have to call them first.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY : I have asked a very specific question. Does the Government have the intention of establishing a National Hospital for the Blind in the Eastern region for helping these poor States ? That is important.

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA : That question will be taken care of. We will look into it.

[Translation]

SHRI D.P. YADAV : Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Minister has said that he did not know as to from where the hon. Member has taken the figures. I would like to tell him that these are from the written reply given to the original question. Is this Government serious about it if so then how this percentage has increased to 1.49 from the earlier 1.38. Besides, the amount of Rs. 550 crore earmarked for controlling blindness is also not sufficient because according to figures every fifth blind person is from India. In the written reply the Government has stated that survey is being conducted in rural areas and people are consulted to effect improvements in the previous Blindness Control scheme. Sir, I also go there but I did not come across even a single person, who could confirm that any such surveyers had come or any committee constituted for this purpose. I would like to know as to whether the Government is serious about it or not ? Today villages are more affected with the problem of visual disability. The reason may be malnutrition or lack of medical facilities supposed to be provided by the Government.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : You are repeating again and again. Please ask the question.

[Translation]

SHRI D.P. YADAV : Villages do not have any authentic record of blind people. No such register is maintained by any department. I would like to know whether the Government propose to launch any programme in this regards so that blinds could be benefited ?

[English]

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA : Prevention of increase from 1.2 to 1.49 unfortunately was not possible due to paucity of funds. Now the position is different. I agree with the hon. Member that we have a quarter of the total blind people of the entire world. Even as compared to the country's position, these seven States have two-thirds of the total blind people of the country. That is why for these seven States the World Bank has given us Rs. 554 crore. This time we have requested the Finance Ministry to allocate more and more funds so that we can try to solve the problem. But I may tell you that it is not so easy immediately to do it because there is a backlog of eight thousand doctors. In some of the States they have been assigned some other work than doing operations. Some people are put as Superintendents of hospitals. Some are put in executive posts. So, we are not getting all these eight thousand doctors. We have written to the State Governments to see that those people are taken out from these executive posts and put on the operation task.

[Translation]

SHRI D.P. YADAV : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise a small question regarding setting up of mobile eye care units. I would like to know whether these units are functional even today. I have not seen such units functioning. Will these really be made functional or continue like this ? Whether the Government has any programme or method to reorganise these units or to make them functional or any such policy has been formulated so far. I would like to say that the Government should ensure that the Rs. 550 crore earmarked for this purpose should not be misused and blinds should get its benefit. I would like to know as to whether the Government has formulated any plan or propose to make amendments in this procedure ?

[English]

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA : Just to decentralise this we have now set up District Blindness Control Societies under the Chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner or collectors, as the case may be. They are taking up this issue. I am not very

very happy. The Health Ministry also is not very very happy we know our short comings. We will try to cope up with these things.

[Translation]

SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to raise the issue regarding the problem of blindness among tribals and people living in the forest areas. There Children do not get nutritious food at their early age and thus blindness has increased among them. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to whether any scheme has been formulated to provide nutritious and balanced diet to them. Whether the Government propose to demarcate such areas for setting up special hospitals there.

[English]

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA : We are strengthening the taluk hospitals and NGOs also. For every operation conducted we are paying them Rs. 250 if they do not use Government facilities. If they use the Government facilities it is Rs. 175. In addition to that, in tribal areas, we are giving Rs. 50 more.

We are supporting them in the purchase of spectacles also.

In the villages, the people put up with their diseases and do not go to the hospitals at all. Only when they find that they cannot see anything, they would go to a hospital. We are now encouraging the motivators to go and bring such people to the hospitals. We are spending Rs. 25 on each individual. We want to enhance it.

This is due to malnutrition. Proper care is not taken when children are born. All these problems are there. It is really vexed problem. We will see to it that this is reduced as much as possible.

SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO : I would like to know the main strategy of the Government in dealing with blindness. Naturally, strategies differ from disease to disease. Is it the camp approach ? Is it the domiciliary approach ? Or, is it the school health approach, where you start by catching them young and see that blindness is prevented as far as possible ? Which of these approaches is being followed ? May be, if all of them are followed, which is the main approach ?

If there is a camp approach, how many camps have been held so far ? What are the details of a camp ? How many doctors will be there ? How many patients can they take up ? Is it for cataract only or for other diseases also ? Some of these details, if the Minister could tell us at least briefly, we can go into further details later, but this is perhaps what hon. Members would very much like to know.

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA : We are also encouraging these camp activities. In schools also, we are asking the NGOs and Governmental organisation . . . (Interruptions).

SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO : I am not talking of 'also'. What is the main approach ?

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA : I cannot understand what he means by 'main approach'.

SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO : The main approach is the approach by which the largest number of patients are treated, statistically.

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA : We have got mobile units in about 301 districts . . . (Interruptions).

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : You can say that there is no change in the approach.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : How can be advise the Minister ? Has he become an Adviser, within the House, to the Minister ? . . . (Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER : Order please.

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA : We have about eighty Central mobile units and about 301 district mobile units. All the districts have not been covered. So, wherever we have these facilities, we are sending them. They are going round the villages to find out the blind, bring them to the hospital and try to cure them . . . (Interruptions).

SHRI RAMENDRA KUMAR : You can ask the concerned Minister to answer the question.

MR. SPEAKER : What is the most important method that the Ministry is following to tackle this problem of blindness ? It cannot be only one method, but what is the main method ?

SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO : I suggest that the hon. Minister gets a note prepared on all these matters because these are statistical details which are needed by every Member. Just saying that they are serious will not do. Of course, the Government is serious. It is supposed to be serious. But what is the result of the seriousness from time to time, from month to month and from year to year ? This is what we would like to know. So, if he is not in a position to find it readily with him, he can send a detailed note on all these aspects.

MR. SPEAKER : Yes, I think, he can send a note.

SHRI R.L. JALAPPA : I will do that.

MR. SPEAKER : Question No. 504; Shri Dileep Singh Bhuria – absent.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : We have only ten minutes left. We have been in the same question.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Question No. 505; Shri N.S.V. Chitthan – absent.

Question No. 506; Shri Ayyanna Patrudu – absent.

Question No. 507; Shri R. Sambasiva Rao – absent; Shri Rajkeshar Singh – absent.

#### Performance of National Immunisation Programme

\*508. SHRI NARAYAN ATHAWALAY : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have reviewed the performance of the National Immunisation Programme during 196-97;

(b) if so, the details of the major achievements under the programme in terms of targets set – State-wise;

(c) names of the States, where outstanding perfor-

mance has been achieved; and

(d) the details of funds provided for 1997-98 under the programme for implementation State-wise and the strategies worked out to make up for deficiencies ?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA) :

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Statement-I showing the state-wise percentage coverage of immunizations among infants and pregnant women during 1996-97 under the programme is laid on the table of the Lok Sabha.

(c) States of Andhara Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have achieved more than 90% coverage during 1996-97 in respect of all the five vaccines. Under Pulse Polio Immunization more than 100% target has been achieved for the country as a whole.

(d) Statement-II showing state-wise allocation for cash assistance during 1997-98 is laid on the table of the Lok Sabha. The immunization programme has been successfully implemented. There has been dramatic decline in all diseases covered under the programme and also in infant mortality.

#### Statement-I

##### Achievement under Universal Immunisation Programme 1996-97

Name of the State/UT	Percentage					Pulse Polio	
	DPT	OPV	BCG	MSL	TT(PW)	7/12/96	18/1/97
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>Larger States</b>							
Andhra Pradesh	99.02	99.11	103.48	91.61	97.39	109.60	111.07
Assam	68.25	68.58	79.56	67.13	62.76	93.71	108.89
Bihar	45.43	53.96	71.11	46.80	31.94	94.32	97.56
Gujarat	* 82.36	83.51	85.42	79.16	78.08	112.14	114.87
Haryana	* 85.65	84.83	97.78	77.14	74.27	109.00	116.54
Karnataka	96.55	96.70	102.17	91.52	97.82	100.83	108.23
Kerala	93.42	94.11	97.11	78.73	77.03	94.80	100.24
Madhya Pradesh	89.30	89.15	95.06	84.20	84.12	102.93	99.61
Maharashtra	* 79.94	80.29	87.19	75.38	68.23	94.69	96.7
Orissa	93.06	93.23	98.16	86.12	78.87	99.48	102.57
Punjab	* 87.72	93.47	98.84	91.51	85.63	108.27	111.03