

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1089
ANSWERED ON:01.03.2006
SPREAD OF LEPROSY BY MOSQUITOES
Mahtab Shri Bhartruhari

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

- (a) Whether the Government is aware about the claim of some scientists from Kolkata stating that mosquitoes can spread leprosy;
- (b) if so, the facts thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) & (c) Leprosy is a communicable disease which spreads very slowly in individuals and community. The most common mode of transmission of leprosy is through naso-respiratory tract and to a lesser extent through direct skin to skin contact. No other specific mode of transmission has been proved.

Researchers from Kolkata school of Tropical Medicine have conducted a study on mice bitten by Aedes mosquito having germ that causes leprosy i.e. (Mycobacterium Leprae) and demonstrated the presence of M. Leprae in footpads of mouse. However no research has been conducted on human beings.

A similar study conducted by JIPMER, Pondicherry concluded that mosquitoes can transfer viable M. Leprae to mouse footpads but the results are insufficient to come to any conclusion about the actual role of the mosquitoes in transmission of leprosy in field conditions.

Findings documented in literature quote that Mycobacterium leprae have been successfully isolated from mosquitoes collected from endemic areas but the role of biting arthropods in transmission of leprosy in human beings is considered negligible.