

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1513
ANSWERED ON:22.08.2007
IMPACT OF INCREASING HEALTH CARE COSTS
Adsul Shri Anandrao Vithoba

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

- (a) whether the World Health Organization has conducted any study on the impact of increasing health care costs as reported in The Hindu dated June 22, 2007;
- (b) if so, whether the Union Government has studied the report prepared by the World Health Organization on the impact of increasing health care costs;
- (c) if so, whether 16 per cent of the families are pushed below the poverty line because of high health care expenditure ;and
- (d) if so, steps taken by the Union Government to provide cheap health care services to the poor?

Answer

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

(a) to(c) Yes, Sir. The World Health Organization (WHO) conducted a survey with the objective of providing an evidence base on health expenditure, insurance, health resources, health state, risk factors, morbidity prevalence, and health system responsiveness for in-patient and out-patient care.

The World Health Survey-India, 2003 was conducted in six States viz. Assam, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. According to the findings of the survey, 80% of the households reported that they paid their health expenditure through current income followed by 16% from borrowed sources. The study also indicates that a non poor household is impoverished by health payment and is pushed-in to poverty in the absence of insurance coverage and lack of protectional measures by other health reimbursement schemes.

The impact of rising health costs has been engaging the attention of the Government and several initiatives are being taken to make quality health care services affordable.

(d) In order to provide effective healthcare to the rural population throughout the country with special focus on 18 States with poor health indicators and weak health infrastructure, the Government has launched the National Rural Health Mission in April, 2005. The Mission adopts a synergistic approach by relating health to determinants of good health and the main objective is to provide accessible, affordable, accountable and reliable health care especially to the poor and vulnerable sections of the population. Further, the gaps in the existing scenario of rural health care are being addressed through involvement of the community, the Panchayati Raj Institutions and other non-governmental organizations. An accredited social health activist will act as a link between the community and the healthcare system.