

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3370  
ANSWERED ON:13.08.2010  
CASES OF ELEPHANTIASIS  
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**Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the cases of hookworm infection and lymphatic filariasis also known as elephantiasis in the country cost closed to \$1 billion per year;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken by the Government to combat these diseases including development of low cost drug and vaccine for their prevention and control;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to seek cooperation of any foreign agency in this regard;and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DINESH TRVEDI)

(a) to (d) A study titled "The Economic Burden of Lymphatic Filariasis in India" was made in 2001 by the scientists of Vector Control & Research Centre, Puducherry and The Wellcome Centre for the Epidemiology of Infectious Disease, Oxford University, UK. As per this study, it has been estimated that an amount of US\$ 842 million are lost due to lymphatic filariasis on account of treatment costs and reduced working time. However, these estimates had some limitations as the data collected for the studies were from South India and were extrapolated to cover the whole country. No such estimates on economic loss are available for hookworm infection.

Since 2004, Government of India has launched a nation-wide campaign for eradication of Lymphatic Filariasis. The campaign is an integral component of the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP) under the overarching umbrella of National Rural Health Mission (NRHM). The main strategy for elimination of lymphatic filariasis is to prevent the transmission of the infection through annual Mass Drug Administration (MDA) of single dose of anti-filarial drugs (Diethyl carbamazine citrate (DEC) and Albendazole tablets) in the endemic population except pregnant women, children below 2 years of age and seriously ill persons.

The anti filarial drugs under the programme are low cost but effective drugs. However, no vaccine is available for prevention and control of lymphatic filariasis.

For carrying out annual Mass Drug Administration (MDA), Government of India provides 100% assistance in cash and kind to the State Governments predominantly from domestic funds. However, WHO supports part supply of Albendazole drug and also provides technical guidelines.