

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:276
ANSWERED ON:22.07.2009
CASES OF BLINDNESS
Rawat Shri Ashok Kumar

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

- (a) whether India is one of the countries worst affected by blindness;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) the number of blind persons in the country, especially in the rural areas, Statewise;
- (d) the financial assistance provided to the States to deal with the problem of blindness during the last three years and the current year, State-wise and year-wise; and
- (e) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to prevent blindness?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABIAZAD)

(a)to(e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 276 FOR 22ND JULY, 2009

(a)&(b): There are an estimated 12 million blind persons (Visual Acuity <6/60) in India.

Cataract is the leading cause of blindness, accounting for 62.6% of all cases in 50+ age group of population, in the country. Due to increase in population and expectancy of life over the years, the volume of cataract cases in the country has also increased. Secondly, since India is a tropical country, the incidence of cataract is quite high. A comparison with some major regions according to WHO is at Annexure-I.

(c) A statement showing estimated number of blind persons in the country, state-wise, is at ANNEXURE-II.

(d) A statement showing the financial assistance provided to States to deal with the problem of blindness during the last three years and current year (2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10), State-wise and Year-wise, under NPCB is at ANNEXURE-III.

(e) Government of India is implementing the National Programme for Control of Blindness by giving support for Cataract Operations; School Eye Screening, Eye Banking and initiatives for diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, childhood blindness and low vision services.