

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3389
ANSWERED ON:29.07.2009
PERSONS WITH AUTISM
Maadam Shri Vikrambhai Arjanbhai

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

- (a) whether a large number of people are suffering from Autism in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) the names of organizations working for the children with autism in the country; and
- (d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to provide proper treatment and facilities to such people

Answer

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

(a) & (b): Autism included under the umbrella term – Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) is a neuro – development disorder. Autism is covered under Section 2(a) of National Trust Act, 1999.

There is no record of enumeration of Autism in India. Neither NSSO nor the Census has covered Autism as a separate category in the survey; hence it is difficult to confirm the number of people living with Autism in the country.

(c) The list of Organizations is annexed (Annexure).

(d) Under the National Trust Act, 1999, a host of activities are undertaken like caregivers courses, training and public awareness programmes etc.

A series of Early Intervention Programmes on Autism is being conducted in collaboration with Voice and Mission, Mumbai. In addition, the State Nodal Agency Center of National Trust in Delhi has organized Early Intervention Programmes in Govt. Hospitals. Awareness Programme is being conducted throughout the country by the registered organizations of the National Trust.

National Trust runs several Schemes like Samarth (Residential Center), Niramaya (Health Insurance Scheme), Aspiration (Day Care Center), Gyan Prabha (Scholarship Scheme), Uddyam Prabha (Interest Subsidy Scheme) all over the country.

The Rehabilitation Council of India has given accreditation to Centres to run courses for training teachers in the management of people with ASD.

Proper treatment of persons with Autism involves first recognizing and diagnosing the conditions. Training is the cornerstone of management. Mental Health Professionals, speech and language therapists, special educators etc are few in number and thus the need for personnel is acute.

The Government of India has adopted community based care of mentally ill persons under District Mental Health Programme (DMHP), a component of the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP). Under DMHP, a mental health team led by a psychiatrist is placed in a district to provide services, training to general health care personnel for identification and treatment of common mental illnesses and conduct IEC activities for awareness.

It has been proposed to re-strategise the NMHP during the 11th Five Year Plan to extend DMHP to more districts in the country with added components of life skills education in schools and counselling services in schools and colleges.

To address the shortage of qualified mental health professionals, manpower development schemes for setting up of centres of excellence in mental health and PG training departments in mental health specialities have been approved under the NMHP for the 11th Five Year Plan.