

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2876

ANSWERED ON:30.03.2012

CASES OF BLINDNESS AND VISUAL DISABILITIES

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

- (a) whether India is one of the most affected countries in the matter of blindness and visual disabilities;
- (b) if so, the details thereof indicating the number of people suffering from blindness and visual disabilities in the country, State/UT-wise;
- (c) the details of the schemes launched alongwith the funds earmarked and provided thereunder for the control of blindness and detection of glaucoma in the country during each of the last three years, State/UT-wise;
- (d) whether the Government has launched a 'Vision 2020 Right to Sight' campaign to control and prevent blindness and visual disabilities including glaucoma; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY)

(a): As per the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates (Global data on visual impairment in the year 2002), out of total 37 million blind persons (Visual Acuity <3/60) in the world, 6.7 million are in India, which is around one-sixth of the total global blind population. As per the estimates there are 6.9 million blind persons in China which is higher than India.

(b): As per the Survey-2001-04 conducted under the National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB) by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, there were around 12 million blind persons (Visual Acuity <6/60) in the country. A statement showing estimated number of blind persons in the country, State/UT-wise, is given at ANNEXURE-I.

(c): The details of major activities undertaken under NPCB for control of avoidable blindness are as under:

- i) Performance of cataract operation through Government and NGO Eye Hospitals;
- ii) Treatment of other eye diseases like, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma management, laser techniques, corneal transplantation, vitreo-retinal surgery, treatment of childhood blindness etc. as new initiatives;
- iii) Involvement of private practitioners in eye care services;
- iv) Distribution of free spectacles to school children suffering from refractive errors under School Eye Screening Programme;
- v) Collection of donated eyes for corneal transplantation and eye banking;
- vi) Training of eye surgeons in various fields of ophthalmology;
- vii) Strengthening/developing of eye care infrastructure.

A statement showing funds provided for control of blindness including treatment of glaucoma in the country during each of the last three years (2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11), State/UT-wise, is given at ANNEXURE-II.

(d)&(e): Vision 2020: Right to Sight is a global initiative to eliminate avoidable blindness. NPCB is committed to the cause of reducing avoidable blindness to 0.3% in the country by the year 2020 by adopting strategies advocated for Vision 2020: Right to Sight Initiative.

The Action Plan under NPCB includes the following major initiatives:-

Decentralized implementation of NPCB through State/District Health and Family Welfare Societies.

Improving quality of services

Preventive Eye care.

To make eye care comprehensive, besides cataract surgery, assistance for other eye diseases like diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma management, laser techniques, corneal transplantation, vitreo-retinal surgery, treatment of childhood blindness etc.

Coverage of underserved areas for eye care services through public-private partnership.

Development of eye care infrastructure.

Ensuring optimal utilization of human resources.

Regular monitoring and evaluation.