

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4768
ANSWERED ON:04.05.2012
OPTOMETRY SCHOOLS COLLEGES INSTITUTES
Jaiswal Dr. Sanjay

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

- (a) whether there is sufficient number of optometrists as per the requirement to provide primary eye care in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the corrective measures taken/proposed by the Government in this regard;
- (c) the number of optometry schools/colleges/institutes in the country alongwith the steps taken to open more such schools/colleges/institutes, State/UT-wise;
- (d) the number of medical schools/colleges/institutes where optometry and related course is being taught in the country, State/UT-wise;
- (e) whether the Government has received any proposals/suggestions from various quarters including Dr. R.P. Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences, AIIMS regarding opening of optometry schools/colleges/ institutes and upgradation of course structure and concerned department; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof alongwith the action taken thereon and the measures taken/proposed by the Government to form an independent Optometry Council of India?

Answer

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

(a) & (b): According to Dr. R.P. Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, there are approximately 9000 Optometrists (4 years course) in the country to meet current requirement of around 1,25,000 qualified Optometrists as per WHO norms. As per figures given by Delhi Optometrists Association, currently, there are around 44,000 (four and two year trained) Optometrists in the country.

Under the National Programme for Control of Blindness, Ophthalmic Assistants are appointed on contractual basis at District Hospitals and Peripheral Health Centres/Vision Centres in States/UTs for providing primary eye care services to meet the shortage of para-ophthalmic manpower.

(c) & (d): At present, details of Optometry schools/colleges/institutes and medical schools where optometry and related course is being taught in the country are not maintained centrally. However, according to Delhi Optometrists Association, there are 125 institutions in different States providing Optometry training in India.

(e): A proposal has been received from the India Vision Institute, Hyderabad for developing of twenty new Optometry schools in India. However, Dr. R.P. Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences, New Delhi has suggested for opening of Optometry Schools/Colleges/Institutes in all Regional Institutes of Ophthalmology including six AIIMS like institutions in India, where basic infrastructure for optometry is existing.

(f): A Bill for National Commission for Human Resources for Health has been introduced in the Rajya Sabha which is under examination by the Department related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare. The proposed Bill provides for overall regulatory body in the form of a Commission which shall regulate medical education and allied health sciences with dual purpose of reforming current regulatory frame work and enhancing the supply of skilled manpower in health sector. No separate Council for Optometry is proposed in the Bill. However, as per the provisions of the Bill, Government will be empowered to constitute National Council for any other discipline of health as may be notified by it under relevant provision.