

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4256
ANSWERED ON:22.03.2013
HIV AIDS AWARENESS IN RURAL AREAS
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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in villages indicate that awareness messages have not reached to the rural areas of the country as desired;
- (b) if so, the details and facts thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the funding for the phase III of the National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) has adequately reached to the village level;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the steps taken/proposed by the Government to create the desired impact of NACP at the grassroot level and focus more on the rural population, which accounts for 40 per cent of HIV/AIDS cases?

Answer

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

(a): No. As per recent HIV Estimations 2012, the overall HIV prevalence among adults in India in 2011 is low at 0.27%. There is no study to indicate that HIV prevalence in villages as a whole is high. Also, as per Behaviour Surveillance Survey 2006, around 75.4% of rural population is aware of HIV/AIDS indicating high reach of awareness messages in the rural areas.

(b): Does not arise.

(c) & (d): Yes. Funding for Phase III of the National AIDS Control Programme has adequately reached the village level through various projects like Link Worker Schemes, Folk Media campaign, targeted interventions etc being implemented for rural population.

The Link Workers Scheme is implemented in 156 districts, to cover 100 villages each with significant number of High Risk Groups (Female Sex Workers, Men who have sex with Men, Injecting Drug Users, Transgenders/Hijra), vulnerable population, Bridge Population (migrants and truckers) and People Living with HIV/AIDS. The villages are selected based on situational need assessment carried out by the project.

Besides, the Department of AIDS Control under the National AIDS Control Programme has developed a communication strategy to create awareness about HIV/AIDS and promote safe behaviors among vulnerable sections of people in all parts of the country. Campaigns are conducted regularly on mass media supported by outdoor media such as hoardings, bus panels, information kiosks, folk performances and exhibition vans. At the inter-personal level, training and sensitization programmes for Self-Help Groups, Anganwadi Workers, Accredited Social Health Activists ASHAs, members of Panchayati Raj Institutions and other key stakeholders are carried out. Vulnerabilities of High Risk Groups including commercial sex workers, men having sex with men, injecting drug users and also truck drivers and migrants are specifically addressed through behavior change communication programmes implemented as part of Targeted Intervention projects. In addition, Integrated Counseling & Testing Centres, STI clinics and Antiretroviral Therapy centres have provision of counseling and provide necessary information to clients approaching them. Department of AIDS Control has also launched three phases of Red Ribbon Express project, in 2007-08 2009-2010 and 2012-13 to generate awareness about HIV / AIDS across the country through a special exhibition train supported by outreach activities. Overall, 2.56 crore people had been reached through special exhibition and outreach activities around the halt stations through three phases of Red Ribbon Express.