

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5130
ANSWERED ON:26.04.2013
CASES OF GLAUCOMA
Abdulrahman Shri ;Ramasubbu Shri S.

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

- (a) whether glaucoma is a major cause of blindness in the country and if so, the details thereof indicating the estimated number of people suffering from the disease, State/UT-wise;
- (b) whether as per recent reports, the number of people afflicted by glaucoma is likely to go up to 16 million by 2020;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (d) the corrective measures taken/proposed by the Government to tackle glaucoma and other eye related problems including colour blindness and spread awareness about the same; and
- (e) the steps taken/proposed by the Government to support research and innovation to find a cure of blindness and the achievements made as a result thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI ABU HASEM KHAN CHOUDHARY)

(a): As per the estimates of National Survey (2001-02) conducted under the National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB) by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, glaucoma contributed 5.8% out of total 12 million blind persons (Visual Acuity<6/60) in the country. As per the estimates, cataract is still the major cause of blindness, contributing 62.6% of the total blind persons in the country. A statement showing estimated number of blind persons, including blindness due to glaucoma, in the country, State/UT-wise, is given at Annexure.

(b) to (d): Dr. Rajendra Prasad Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi has reported that as per the estimates of Quigley HA and Broman AT in 2006, the estimated number of glaucoma cases in India in 2010 were 12 million. These estimates also showed that the number of people affected by glaucoma is likely to go up to 16 million by 2020. The corrective measures taken under NPCB to tackle glaucoma and other eye related problems including colour blindness and spread awareness about the same are as under:

- i) Nationwide awareness campaign about early detection and treatment of glaucoma through multimedia like, television, print media including newspapers and magazines in all regional languages
- ii) Observance of World Glaucoma Day on 12th March every year to intensify awareness about glaucoma;
- iii) Organizing screening eye camps for early detection of cataract, glaucoma and other eye diseases at district level;
- iv) Referral and prompt treatment to the identified/detected cases of eye diseases through Government and NGO Eye Hospitals;
- v) Assistance to Non-Governmental Organizations for operation/treatment and management of eye diseases like, cataract, glaucoma diabetic retinopathy, childhood blindness etc.
- vi) Screening of children for identification and treatment of refractive errors and distribution of free spectacles to those suffering from refractive errors under School Eye Screening Programme;
- vii) Collection of donated eyes for corneal transplantation and
- viii) development/strengthening of eye banking services;
- ix) In-service training to eye surgeons from Government hospitals in various fields of ophthalmology for development of skills;
- x) Strengthening/developing of eye-care infrastructure at various levels to improve quantity and quality of eye-care services.

(e): Conducting research activities is not an approved activity under the existing scheme of NPCB. According to Dr. Rajendra Prasad Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, special support for conducting research and innovations in cure of blindness is funded through Government agencies like Indian Council of Medical Research, Department of Sciences and Technology, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research etc.

With the inclusion of modern techniques and advance ophthalmic equipments in treatment of various eye diseases under NPCB, the prevalence of blindness in the Country has come down from 1.1% (2001-02) to 1% (2006-07).