

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:349

ANSWERED ON:20.03.2015

CASES OF BLINDNESS

Chautala Shri Dushyant;Kodikunnil Shri Suresh

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

- (a) whether India is one of the countries worst affected by blindness, if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor indicating the number of visually impaired persons, State/UT-wise;
- (b) the scheme being implemented by the Government to control blindness indicating the funds allocated and spent for the purpose during each of the last three years and the current year, State/UT-wise;
- (c) whether the Government has assessed the requirement of optometrists and donated eyes to prevent blindness in the country and if so, the details and the outcome thereof;
- (d) whether thousands of donated eyes are reportedly left unused/wasted in Government eye banks/hospitals across the country, if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor indicating the number of eyes utilized out of the total eyes received through donation during the said period, State/UT-wise; and
- (e) the steps being taken by the Government for improvement of eye donation, collection, storage, processing and maintenance of quality in this regard?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA)

(a) to (e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LQK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 349 FOR 20TH MARCH, 2015

(a) : As per the WHO Global Data on Visual impairments 2010. China accounts for 20.9% and India 20.5% of the total blindness in the classified 8 WHO regions. As per the Rapid survey(RAAB) on avoidable blindness conducted by National Programme for Control of Blindness (NPCB), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare during the year 2006-07, the prevalence of blindness in India was found to be 1%. The reasons of blindness are:

1. Cataract 62%
2. Refractive error 23%
3. Glaucoma 5%
4. Retinal disorder 5%
5. Others 10%

However, around 85% of this is treatable through medical and surgical interventions.

The details of estimated visually impaired persons State/UTs wise is in Annexe-L

(b) :A scheme named 'National Programme for Control of Blindness' (NPCB) is being implemented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for control of blindness. The details of funds allocation, releases and expenditure incurred by the State Government are given in Annexure II.

(c): The Optometrists/Para-Medical Ophthalmic Assistants are required in Vision Centres, Community Health Centres, District Hospitals and Government Medical Colleges. To meet the requirement of Optometrists/Para-Medical Ophthalmic Assistants at these places, each State has sanctioned Optometrists/PMOAs posts as per the requirement. NPCB has also made a provision for appointing 1000 Ophthalmic Assistants on contractual basis in States/IJTs during the 12,h Five Year Plan. Based on the rapid survey on avoidable blindness conducted under NPCB during 2006-07 and the current population of the country, around 1.13 lakh persons are bilaterally corneal blind in the country. Out of these, approximately 50% persons can he delivered vision by transplant of cornea. Remaining 50% blind persons cannot be provided vision due to associated involvement of posterior segment (retina).

(d) : No report about intentional non-use/wastage of donated eyes in Government eye banks/hospitals across the country has been received. It is, however, normal that all collected donated eyes cannot be used for transplantation due to various medical reasons, like poor quality of collected corneas due to various reasons like, - age of donor, pre-existing degeneration/diseases etc. A statement showing number of donated eyes collected and utilized for keratoplasty (transplant of cornea). State/UT- wise, during 2013-14 is given at ANNEXURE III.

(e) : The steps taken under NPCB for improvement of eye donation, collection, storage, processing the maintenance of quality in this regard include:

- i) Strengthening of Eye Banks and Eye Donation Centres in the country by providing required ophthalmic equipment and manpower;
- ii) Collection of eyes by Eye Banks from willing donors after their death and also from those patients who die in hospitals through "Hospital Corneal Retrieval Programme" for timely transplantation of cornea;
- iii) Appointment of Eye Donation Counsellors in the identified Eye Banks to promote eye donation and timely collection of donated eyes.
- iv) Provision of engagement of 220 Eye Donation Counsellors to be posted in the Eye Banks, on contractual basis throughout the country under NPCB during the 12 Five year Plan;
- v) Promotion of eye banking and eye donation through information education communication (IEC) activities.