

**Title:** Need to check the menace of drug-trafficking in North-East region, particularly in Manipur.

SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE (JORHAT): Mr. Chairman, the transit route of drug lies through the North-East to the rest of the country and beyond the national frontiers. Being located in a geographical position bordering on Myanmar with easy access to Laos, and not far from the notorious Golden Triangle, Manipur in this region has been chosen by the narcotic cartel as the most suitable launching pad for pushing on drug traffic. In Manipur where about one per cent of the population is addicted to drugs, seventy two per cent of the incidence is caused by needle sharing. Out of the total population of about twenty lakh people, twenty five thousand are estimated to be drug addicts. Among the addicts, more than seventy per cent are HIV positive. Now, the disease is not confined to drug users alone. From the drug addicts the infection has spilled over to the general population. The problem has assumed such an alarming dimension that in order to curb the growth of the bigger evil, AIDS, a scheme 'Needle Exchange Programme' has been launched to minimise needle sharing. Unless Government takes stringent measures and effective assistance from the UN agency, in expertise and fund, this menace will not only overwhelm Manipur but the entire North-East. It is imperative that the international drug mafia which operate in collusion with their counterparts in the country, most of whom are outsiders in the North-East, must be chased out of the region, vigilance fortified and rehabilitation of the drug addicts strengthened.