

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to help those widows and aged people, State-wise;

(d) whether the Government have formulated any scheme to provide economic protections and pension to all such people under the policy; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI) : (a) to (e) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[English]

Amarnath Yatra

4080. SHRI SHANKAR PANNU : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of pilgrims visited Amarnath during the last three years;

(b) whether the Government are aware that during yatra, pilgrims face a lot of problems because of inadequate basic facilities;

(c) if so, the steps proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard;

(d) whether any financial assistance is provided to the pilgrims of Amarnath by the Union Government; and

(e) if so, the break-up of Financial Assistance provided to these pilgrims during each of the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI) : (a) The number of pilgrims, who had visited Amarnath during the last 3 years is as follow

1995:	60,000
1996:	1,20,000
1997:	79,035

(b) and (c) Following the tragedy during the Yatra in 1996, the Sengupta committee had recommended a number of steps/measures for providing additional safety/facilities to the Amarnath pilgrims in future. These recommendations were forwarded to the Government of Jammu & Kashmir as arrangements for the Yatra including provision of basic facilities for the Yatris is the

responsibility of the State Government for smooth journey of the Yatris include assistance for transportation from Jammu to Pahalgam, provision of accommodation through tents with beddings as well as shelter-sheds; provision of eatables at concessional rates and establishment of langars by voluntary organisations, drinking water; establishment of medical camps with doctors and para-medical staff detailed for duty; supply of fuel, firewood and essential commodities like rice, sugar, atta, rubber shoes etc. at Government controlled rates and arrangement of generator power supply. The arrangements also include upgradation of tracks, STD/ISD/PCO facilities at all stations, periodical weather forecasts disseminated further through Doordarshan, All India Radio etc.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

AIDS and Leprosy Centres

4081. SHRIMATI RANI CHITRALEKHA BHONSLE: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of AIDS and Leprosy eradication centres are in operation in different parts of the country, particularly in Maharashtra, State-wise;

(b) the amount of financial assistance sanctioned and released to each of these centres by the Government during each of the last two years;

(c) whether any free treatment is being given by these centres to the patients; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI) : (a) Statement I & II showing the number of AIDS Surveillance Centres and Leprosy Eradication Centres in different part of the country are enclosed.

(b) Financial assistance to the AIDS Surveillance Centres is channelised through the State Governments. The State-Wise break-up of allocation of funds under National AIDS Control Programme is given in the attached statement III & IV.

(c) and (d) Under National Leprosy Eradication Programme, all the districts of the country including Maharashtra State have been provided drugs for multi drug therapy for providing free treatment to Leprosy patients. Under the on going National AIDS Control