

Gutka on Public Health". Subsequently, the Govt of AP vide its letter dated 31.12.96 requested the Govt. of India that the possibility of prohibition on production and sale of Pan Masala/Gutka, Zarda, Chewing Tobacco may be examined in consultation with the Indian Council of Medical Research.

(d) No decision to ban Gutka has been taken by the Govt. as yet.

World Bank Assistance for Blindness Control Programme in A.P.

2013. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Blindness Control Project being implemented in several States with aid from the World Bank has proved more successful in Andhra Pradesh at present;

(b) if so, the total number of cataract surgeries performed in Andhra Pradesh during the last year;

(c) the extent to which it is more than the target;

(d) the details of places where cataract surgeries were performed;

(e) the total number of blindness cases remaining in Andhra Pradesh at present;

(f) the main reasons for increase in the number of blindness in Andhra Pradesh; and

(g) the further steps taken by the Government to eradicate this disease?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI) : (a) The performance of Andhra Pradesh in the implementation of the World Bank Assisted Cataract Blindness Control Project is second highest in the achievement of targets for cataract surgery as compared to the remaining Project States.

(b) and (c) During the financial year 1997-98, 2,95,735 cataract surgeries were performed as against the target of 2,46,400.

(d) Cataract surgeries were performed at District Hospitals, Medical Colleges, District Mobile Units, Private Hospitals and Hospitals run by voluntary organisations and at eye camps.

(e) and (f) As per the rapid assessment survey conducted during 1997-98, the prevalence of blindness in the age group 50-59 is reported to have reduced by 16% and in the 60-69 age group by 24%. Thus, against the general prevalence rate of blindness at 1.5% of the population, it is estimated that in Andhra Pradesh it may be 1.24% of the population. Increase in cataract blindness is due to increase in the population of the elderly as cataract is a degenerative disease, that mainly occurs among the older age groups.

(g) Cataract Blindness cannot be eradicated but can be controlled. Therefore, under the World Bank Assisted Cataract Blindness Control Project strengthening capacity in the public sector service centres; upgrading infrastructure; increasing intersectoral cooperation and IEC services; providing training to personnel; and strengthening the District Blindness Control Society and focussing on quality of cataract surgery are some of the activities being implemented in the Project States.

NDMC Shops

2014. DR. BIZAY SONKAR SHASTRI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of NDMC shops whose sale-purchase was regularised during the last five years;

(b) whether the ownership of these shops have been changed;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether there is any proposal to review the regularisation/eviction of NDMC shops?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI) : (a) to (c) NDMC allots its shops on a licence basis normally for a period of five years. The ownership of these shops remains always with the NDMC.

During the last five years, the licences of the shops were transferred by the NDMC in 215 cases on the ground of sub-letting or on legal heir basis after completion of prescribed formalities etc.

(d) NDMC has already formulated in December, 1997 a policy for regularisation of the units in which eviction orders had been passed by the Estate officer.

Setting up of High Power Committee

2015. SHRI S. S. OWAISI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Commission for Minorities has set up a High Power Committee to study the socio-economic and educational conditions of minorities;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether this Committee also studied the lack of effective implementation of 15 points programme and suggestion made on minorities welfare;

(d) whether this Committee also studied the Gopal Singh Penal Report, 1983;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) the steps proposed by the Government for the welfare of minorities?