

(d) The total amount of rebate claimed by the Government of Kerala during 1987-88 was Rs. 113.71 lakh out of which Rs. 85.20 lakh was released as 'on account' payment pending submission of final claims. The total amount of rebate claimed by the Government of Kerala during 1988-89 was Rs. 125.00 lakh out of which Rs. 93.75 lakh was requested to be released on 'on account' basis pending submission of detailed documents. This rebate claim could not be released as there was already one 'on account' payment pending final settlement by the State Government

Title Deeds of Forest Lands to Occupations

*651. SHRI THAMPAN THOMAS : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any applications for grant of title deeds to pre-1977 occupations of forest land are pending with Government of India;

(b) if so, the details thereof ; and

(c) the action by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z.R. ANSARI): (a) to (c). The Government of Kerala have submitted a proposal for diversion of 28588.15 ha. of forest land for assignment to agricultural accountants in 5 districts including Idukki district of Kerala. The Kerala High Court has stayed all proceeding for assignment of forest land in Idukki district. In view of this further consideration of the proposal has been kept in abeyance.

Blindness Incidence

*653. SHRI MOHANBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any survey has been conducted to assess the number of persons, particularly children who go blind every year in the country;

(b) if so, the causes and details thereof; and

(c) what further steps are being taken as a result of survey to check the blindness cases and also for the treatment of the blind persons in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (KUMARI SAROJ KHAPARDE):

(a) to (c). According to the Survey carried out by India Council of Medical Research in 1971-73 the number of blind persons (including Children) in the country was estimated at 9 million. Further country-wide survey has also been conducted during 1985-88 by Dr. R.P. Centre. The data in respect of 14 major States has since been analysed. According to this survey the prevalence rate of Blindness among children between 6-10 years is 0.05% and in the age group of 11-14 is 0.26%. The main causes of blindness are Trachoma, Eye injuries, Cataract, Glaucoma etc. Under the National Programme for Control of Blindness the following steps have been taken to check/treat blindness cases:-

(i) Government of India has launched a National Programme for control of Blindness since 1976-77 throughout the country. The strategy involves establishing of infrastructure at Primary, secondary and tertiary levels, Camp approach for eye care services in the out-reach areas and Health Education measures for the prevention of blindness.

Besides, Vitamin 'A' distribution is being carried out by the network of the M.C.H. Programme of Department of

Family Welfare for prevention of blindness due to Vitamin 'A' deficiency in young children.

- (ii) Prevention of eye injuries in Children through School Education and Education of Parents and proper management of eye injuries in Government Dispensaries and Primary Health Centres.
- (iii) Establishment of Eye Banks and provision of facilities for corneal grafting in selected Centres in the country for Surgical treatment of blindness.
- (iv) Trained Ophthalmic Assistants posted at Primary Health Centres conduct screening for visual defects and other causes of Blindness in the Schools and Community and refer cases to the doctors at Primary Health Centres for suitable treatment.

Pollution in Capital

*654. SHRI V. KRISHNA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a group of environmental activities has prepared a report on environmental pollution in the Capital; if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether such studies are proposed to be taken up by Government in other cities to create pollution awareness among the people ?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z.R. ANSARI): (a) Yes, Sir. A report entitled, "Kali Dhoop" prepared by a group of Journalists associated with the Bharatiya paryavaran Samit deals with the Pollution in Delhi under five categories as follows:-

(i) AIR POLLUTION :-

The main reasons for increase in air pollution are growth in the population, increase in the number of automobiles, emissions from industrial units numbering about 73,000 and the thermal plants,.

(ii) WATER POLLUTION IN THE YAMUNA

The Yamuna in Delhi is excessively polluted because of the untreated municipal and industrial waste falling into it through 17 major drains, f Najafgarh being the largest.

(iii) POLLUTION CAUSED BY SEWERAGE AND DOMESTIC GARBAGE.

Even with an increase in the existing treatment facility, nearly 100 mgd of untreated sewerage would flow into the river. Also there is problem of pollution by garbage as the daily garbage generated in Delhi is 300 tons.

(iv) NOISE POLLUTION

There is noise pollution in Delhi emanating from various activities of increased population but primarily from running of poorly maintained vehicles.

(v) OTHER SOURCES OF POLLUTION

Use of chemicals and pesticides in agriculture is causing various diseases. Pollution has been accentuated by reduction in the green cover in Delhi.