

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**RAJYA SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.298  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 1<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER, 2015**

**RISE IN CASES OF CATARACT AND BLINDNESS**

**298. SHRI MEGHRAJ JAIN:**

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that increase in pollution and ultraviolet rays are the main reasons behind the rise in cases of cataract and blindness in the country;
- (b) if so, whether any specific committee has been constituted to get rid of this problem; and
- (c) whether special camps are being organised in hospitals across the country for check up of eyes in view of this problem and if so, the details thereof?

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

(a): Ultraviolet radiation is one of the multifactorial etiology causing cataracts. There is no scientific evidence of pollution being a cause of cataract formation.

As per Rapid Assessment of Avoidable blindness (RAAB) national survey conducted in 2007 the prevalence of blindness has reduced from the earlier 1.1% in 2001-02 to 1% in 2007. Cataract accounts for 62% of the total blindness hence there is no rise in the cases of cataract per million population.

As per the systematic reviews of world literature, most cataracts develop slowly with normal aging. The cause of age-related cataract is multifactorial and not completely understood. However, cataracts also may be related to genetic diseases, medical conditions such as diabetes, poor nutrition, sun damage, drugs (steroids), smoking, alcohol, eye trauma may influence cataract formation in addition to ultraviolet rays.

(b): No specific committee has been constituted under National Programme For Control of Blindness (NPCB) to get rid of this problem. However, awareness has been generated amongst masses to protect their eyes from exposure to excessive light, particularly so during summer months.

(c): Screening eye camps are organized under the NPCB all over the country under the direct supervision of district health authorities to check the eyes of people for development of cataract and surgical treatment is provided to the people suffering from cataract for restoration of vision.