

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

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 165  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 2<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY, 2018**

**GLAUCOMA**

**165. SHRI RAGHAV LAKHANPAL:**

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

- (a) whether glaucoma is a major cause of blindness in the country and if so, the details thereof indicating the estimated number of people suffering from the disease, State/UT-wise;
- (b) the corrective measures taken/ proposed by the Government to tackle glaucoma and other eye related problems including colour blindness and spread awareness about the same; and
- (c) the steps taken/proposed by the Government to support research and innovation to find a cure for blindness and the achievements made as a result thereof?

**ANSWER  
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND  
FAMILY WELFARE  
(SMT. ANUPRIYA PATEL)**

(a): As per the findings of the detailed Blindness Survey (2001-02) conducted under the National Programme for Control of Blindness & Visual Impairment (NPCB&VI) in the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of blindness accounting for 5.8% of the total 12 million (approximate) cases of blindness in the country.

Various studies done in the Country have shown that the prevalence of Glaucoma varies from 1%-6% in different states of India.

- (b): The following corrective measures have been taken under NPCB&VI to tackle glaucoma and other eye related problems including colour blindness and spread awareness about the same:
- Decentralized implementation of the scheme through State/District Health Societies;
  - Conducting workshops of District Ophthalmologists to sensitize them on early diagnosis and treatment of Glaucoma cases in the country;
  - Instructions have been issued to all States for holding comprehensive screening eye camps including Glaucoma screening and referral of suspected cases;
  - In-service training of eye surgeons for improvement of skills for treatment of various eye diseases including diagnosis and treatment of Glaucoma;
  - Providing comprehensive eye care services for eye diseases like Cataract, Diabetic Retinopathy, Glaucoma, Corneal Blindness, Retinal Diseases, Childhood Blindness including Retinopathy of Prematurity etc.;

- Financial assistance to identified NGO eye hospitals and private practitioners for treatment of eye diseases including Glaucoma;
- Provision of essential drugs and ophthalmic equipments at District Hospitals for diagnosis and treatment of eye diseases including Glaucoma;
- Promoting preventive Eye care and creating awareness during various annual events under the programme.

(c): The following research studies have been undertaken by AIIMS, New Delhi, to find a cure for blindness:

- I. A pilot study was undertaken which included 30 patients of retinitis pigmentosa to assess safety and function of retina using electrophysiological tests. The study showed that use of stem cells is safe and produce changes in retinal function.
- II. Another study funded by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) was conducted to assess the role of self-derived bone marrow stem cells in Dry Age Related Macular Degeneration. The Stem Cell therapy was done for 30 patients and the results were encouraging. Electrophysiological tests showed significant improvement in these patients.
- III. A study was also conducted to evaluate cultivated Limbal Stem Cell transplantation to evaluate its long term outcome in children and adults. According to Institute, nowadays, cultivated Limbal Stem Cell Transplantation is preferred over conventional Limbal Stem Cell Therapy due to decreased risk of fellow eye complications.