

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1940
TO BE ANSWERED ON 29TH NOVEMBER, 2019**

PROGRAMMES TO REDUCE BLINDNESS

1940. SHRI KAUSHALENDRA KUMAR:

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

- (a) the programmes being run by the Government to bring down the percentage of blindness up to 0.3 per cent by the year 2021 as stipulated by the World Health Organization so that the target may also be achieved in India;
- (b) whether any survey is being conducted by the Government in order to achieve the target and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the main reason for blindness is cataract and the second is glaucoma, if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to conduct research to tackle glaucoma as the sight is non-recoverable in this disease; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)**

(a): National Programme for Control of Blindness & Visual Impairment (NPCB&VI) is being implemented by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare since 1976 with the goal to bring down the prevalence of blindness to 0.3% by the year 2020 in the country. As per the findings of the National Blindness and Visual Impairment Survey (2015-19), the prevalence of blindness in the country has come down to 0.36% from the level of 1% during 2006-07.

The goal of NPCB&VI for reduction of blindness is in line with the Vision 2020: The Right to Sight' initiative of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

(b): Under NPCB&VI recurring grant is provided to States/UTs for conducting eye surgeries including cataract surgeries at District Hospitals, identified Non-Governmental Eye hospitals and private practitioners for control of blindness and visual impairment in the country.

As per reports furnished by States/UTs, more than 60 lakh cataract surgeries are being conducted annually under NPCB&VI.

(c): As per the findings of the National Blindness and Visual Impairment Survey (2015-19), Cataract is the main cause of blindness and accounts for 66.2% of total blindness. Glaucoma is the fifth most common cause accounting for 5.5% of total blindness.

(d) & (e): Glaucoma screening is important strategy, but at present the valid screening test that can be performed by the optometrists at primary level are lacking. A multi-centric research is planned in collaboration with All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) New Delhi and Department of Health Research to validate the screening test that can be performed by ophthalmic assistants at primary level of care.