

COUNCIL OF STATES

Tuesday, 29th July 1952

The Council met at a quarter past eight of the Clock, Mr. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

NUMBER OF LEPERS IN INDIA

*53. SHRI D. NARAYAN : Will the Minister for HEALTH be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of lepers in India and the State in which the number is the largest;

(b) the measures which are being adopted by Government to check this disease; and

(c) whether there are any asylums run by the Government; and, if so, where they are located; and what is the number of lepers cared for in each of them ?

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR) : (a) No statistics of leprosy patients based on any systematic survey are available. The number has been estimated to be in the region of 12 lakhs by an expert committee which was appointed recently by Government to advise them on the steps to be taken to establish a Central Leprosy Teaching and Research Institute.

The incidence of leprosy, as assessed by the Health Survey and Development Committee, is greatest in South and North East India.

(b) The primary responsibility for the prevention and treatment of leprosy rests with the State Governments. They maintain and help institutions which provide facilities for the treatment of leprosy.

(c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House. [See Appendix II, Annexure No. 43.]

SHRI D. NARAYAN : In how many asylums are Sulphone drugs used ?

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR : Sir, it is difficult to say precisely in how many they are used, but I imagine that they are used in all cases, because that is the latest treatment.

SHRI D. NARAYAN : What domiciliary help is given to lepers ?

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR : As I said before, that is the responsibility of the State Governments, but the State Governments do give domiciliary help.

SHRI D. NARAYAN : Is it a fact that thousands of them roam in towns and cities and beg ?

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR : That is so, Sir.

SHRI D. NARAYAN : How is it going to be stopped, Sir ?

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR : Well, there are many things that we would like to stop but which are difficult to put a stop to.

SHRI D. NARAYAN : Is there any arrangement for isolating children from the lepers ?

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR : In certain States that is being tried; but, there again, it is a question of finance.

SHRI TAJAMUL HUSAIN : May I know if leprosy is on the increase in India; and, if so, what Government have done to decrease it ?

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR : It is difficult to say whether it is on the increase, Sir. In certain areas, after investigations we found that the number of new cases was not higher than the number of deaths. We cannot therefore definitely say that it is on the increase.