

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
RAJYA SABHA
QUESTION NO 24.11.2000
ANSWERED ON
SUICIDES DUE TO DEPRESSION .

85

SHRI DINA NATH MISHRA

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS, ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS, AGRICULTURE, AGRICULTURE, HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :-

- (a) whether 10 to 20 million people are suffering from mental illness due to lack of awareness and proper treatment and about half of them commit suicide, as reported in the Statesman dated 17th October, 2000;
- (b) whether sixty per cent suicides are due to depression;
- (c) if so, whether Government propose to identify sections suffering from psychological disorders and provide them proper treatment;
- (d) whether some NGOs are working in this field; and
- (e) if so, what success has been achieved so far in this regard?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE

(DR.C.P. THAKUR)

(a)to (e):A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 85 FOR 24.11.2000

Epidemiological studies have revealed that 1 to 2% of the population have major mental disorders and 5 to 10% suffer from minor mental disorders. However, it is not true that half of all the people suffering from various mental illnesses commit suicide. In fact, the total number of suicides reported in the country as per information available with the National Crime records Bureau for the year 1998 is 104713 only.

Suicides are commonly associated with depressive disorders, and all the persons afflicted with mental disorders may not be suffering from depressive disorders. However, there is widespread ignorance about various aspects of mental disorders and about the fact that appropriate treatment is available for mentally ill patients. It is also not true that 60% of suicides are due to depressive disorders. Studies on suicides conducted in different centres in India show that a variety of psychological, social, - economic and personal factors are responsible for suicides. Many persons committing suicide may also be suffering from long standing painful or untreatable physical conditions.

The Government has already initiated a pilot programme of providing care for persons with mental disorders in selected districts in the country. The District Mental Health Programme is currently being implemented in 22 districts in 20 States and Union Territories. Its aim is to identify persons suffering from serious mental disorders and epilepsy and manage them at the primary health care centre and district level by trained doctors and with the active support of the families and the community in which the patient lives.

A growing number of Non Governmental Organizations [NGOs] have recently started showing interest in the field of mental health care as well as suicide prevention. Some of the prominent NGOs are the Medico Pastoral Association in Bangalore, SNEHA - A suicide prevention programme in Chennai, Richmond Fellowship India in Bangalore and New Delhi, SCARF in Chennai, Sanjivini in Delhi and Samaritans in Calcutta. NGOs work to increase public awareness about mental illnesses, decrease stigma related to mental disorders, provide rehabilitation services to mentally ill, provide residential care and facilities for chronic mentally ill, run counselling and walk-in services for persons with minor mental disorders, crisis intervention service, etc.