

## Medical and Health Care

34. The Central Plan outlay on medical and health care has been enhanced from Rs.282 crore in 1991-92 (RE) to Rs.918 crore in 1997-98 (RE). It may be observed from Table 10.12 that there has been marked expansion in infrastructure for health services since 1951. As the communicable diseases still continue to be the major cause of morbidity and mortality, the central plan outlays have been stepped up during 1997-98 for control of major diseases like Malaria, AIDS, Tuberculosis and Leprosy .

35. In pursuance of the aim of re-orientation towards "Health for Under Privileged" under the main objective "Health for All – 2000 A.D.", a National Illness Assistance Fund has been set up to ensure necessary financial assistance to patients living below the poverty line for undergoing specialised medical treatment from certain specified life threatening diseases. The progress of ten major National Health programmes aimed at prevention, control and eradication of communicable and non-communicable diseases is continued to be monitored by the Government for implementation. A scheme for evolving a comprehensive disease surveillance system with the National Institute of Communicable Diseases as the nodal agency has been initiated.

36. The National Malaria Eradication Programme based on 50:50 cost sharing between the Centre and the States was followed vigorously particularly in the tribal areas of the country where endemicity is very high. In the case of seven North Eastern States, 100 per cent Central assistance is being provided to intensify malaria control activities. Besides, the Enhanced Malaria Control Project has been negotiated with the International Development

Agency of the World Bank. For the first time, biocides, synthetic pyrethroid and medicated bed-nets are being supplied selectively in view of the need to respond to the special problems of areas which do not respond to conventional strategies.

37. A mid-term review of the World Bank Project conducted during April 1997 in sixteen States revealed that there had been a reduction of 43 per cent in the prevalence of leprosy by 1996 as compared to 1994. Early case detection and disability among new cases has also shown decline of 47 per cent. These results show that the target to eliminate leprosy by the year 2000 A.D. seems feasible.

38. Under the National AIDS Control Programme which ensures blood safety, control of STD, creation of awareness, surveillance and clinical management, 815 blood banks have been upgraded and 154 zonal blood testing centers have been set up. As per the directive of the Supreme Court, a National Blood Transfusion Council and State/UT Blood Transfusion Councils have been set up to coordinate the supply of safe blood and blood products and phase out professional blood donation in a time phased manner.

39. The Tuberculosis Control Project with World Bank assistance of about Rs.605 crore has become operational from May 8, 1997. The project, for a duration of 5 years, seeks to introduce short course chemotherapy for the control of tuberculosis. At the end of the project, additional 9.5 lakh patients will be cured and nearly 80,000 deaths will be averted.

40. The country is now on the verge of achieving zero Guinea worm status. The number of cases of Guinea Worm infection has dropped to only 9 in 1996. It is likely that there may not be any case in 1997.

**TABLE 10.12**  
**Expansion of Health Services**

Item	(in numbers)						
	1951	1961	1971	1981	1992	1996	1997
1. Medical Colleges **	28*	60	98	111	146	NA	NA
2. Hospitals **	2694	3094	3862	6804	13692	NA	NA
3. Dispensaries **	6515	9406	12180	16751	27403	NA	NA
4. Community Health Centres @	0	0	0	217	2186	2572	2619
5. Primary Health Centres @	725	2565	5112	5740	20701	21917	22002
6. Sub-Centres @	—	—	28489	51405	131370	134931	136324
7. Hospital beds(all types)**	117178	230000	348655	569495	834650	NA	NA
8. Doctors **	61840	83756	151129	268712	410875	NA	NA
9. Dentists **	3290	3582	5512	8648	11300	NA	NA
10. Nurses **	16550	35584	80620	154280	385410	565696	NA

NA - Not available. \* Pertains to 1950. \*\* As on December 31. @As on March 31.  
Source : Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

41. Blindness has been a major public health problem in India. An ambitious project for conducting 21 million sight restoring cataract surgeries have been taken up at a cost of Rs.554 crore with assistance from the World Bank. During the year 1996, 27 lakh cataract surgeries were conducted which has been a record. The goal is to reduce the prevalence of blindness substantially by 2000.

42. With the creation of a separate Department for Indian System of Medicine and Homeopathy (ISM&H), it is expected that the Indian system of Medicine will get a boost in coming years. ISM&H aims to develop and propagate Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Yoga, Naturopathy and Homeopathy. A sum of Rs.23 crore has been provided in 1997-98 (RE). The Government has drawn up a comprehensive action plan for involvement of ISM&H practitioners in various National Health Care Programmes.