

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:156

ANSWERED ON:28.11.2001

NATIONAL HEALTH POLICY

MANIBHAI RAMJIBHAI CHAUDHARY;NANDIPAKU VENKATASWAMY

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

- (a) whether the Government are contemplating to review or amend the National Health Policy;
- (b) whether India has not been able to ensure availability of essential and life saving drugs to the people at affordable prices;
- (c) if so, the remedial measures taken/proposed to be taken in this regard; and
- (d) the time by which the Government are likely to come out with a comprehensive National Health Policy?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (PROF. RITA VERMA)

(a)to(d): A statement is laid on the table of the Lok Sabha.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 156 FOR 28.11.2001.

(a) In view of the significant epidemiological and demographic changes in the country since 1983, when the first National Health Policy (NHP) was formulated, a draft NHP-2001 has been prepared and the same is under finalisation.

(b) & (c) In order to ensure availability of drugs at reasonable prices, the Government has been promulgating Drugs (Prices Control) Order under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 from time to time. The current order known as the Drugs (Prices Control) Order 1995 was promulgated on 6 January, 1995. Availability of good quality medicines at reasonable prices is emphasized in the Drug Policy. The steps taken to encourage production of drugs and make them available at reasonable prices include de-licensing of drug industry, barring a few items; automatic approval of foreign investment up-to a specified limit; allowing imports under OGL; and exemption from price control for a period of 5 years, if the new drug is developed through indigenous R & D. Free drugs are supplied under various disease control programmes being implemented by the Government. Also, supply of essential drugs with Central Government funding through the decentralized system, is an initiative, contained in the Draft National Health Policy-2001.

(d) After wide-ranging deliberations, involving concerned Central Governments, State Governments, voluntary organizations, eminent health professionals and Central Council of Health and Family Welfare, the apex advisory body on health care, a Draft National Health Policy has been prepared. Comments received on the draft policy are under scrutiny and the policy after finalisation shall be sent to the Cabinet for approval.