

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:238
ANSWERED ON:17.12.2003
PATENTS FOR TRADITIONAL MEDICINES
SRIPRAKASH JAISWAL

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

- (a) whether western drugs manufacturing companies have applied for patents of a number of traditional medicines produced in India and its neighbouring countries;
- (b) if so, whether any agreement has been signed or a consensus reached between the SAARC countries to guard their traditional knowledge of medicines;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS(SMT. SUSHMA SWARAJ)

(a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.
STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 238 FOR 17-12-2003.

- (a) Sample search carried out in April, 2003, on the patents filed in United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), European Patent Office (EPO), United Kingdom Patent Office (UKPO) revealed more than 15,000 patent references of traditional medicines including those of India and neighbouring countries. Specific information relating to applications filed by Western drug manufacturing countries for patents of traditional medicines produced in India and its neighbouring countries is not maintained centrally.
- (b) & (c) SAARC Traditional Knowledge Task Force has been constituted on classification of SAARC Traditional Knowledge by the SAARC Secretariat. The recommendation made in the SAARC Health Ministers Conference held from 13th to 15th November, 2003 in New Delhi inter-alia, included regional cooperation for preservation and protection of traditional medicinal knowledge.
- (d) Government have taken up a TKDL project to prevent misappropriation of knowledge on traditional medicine by others. The first phase of Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) containing 36,000 Ayurvedic formulations has been completed and the work in regard to second phase is underway. The work has also been started for Traditional Knowledge Digital Library of Unani and Siddha. The access to TKDL shall be provided to the International Patent Offices after getting Non-Disclosure Agreement and this will help in preventing piracy of traditional knowledge of medicine by others.