

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:457
ANSWERED ON:27.04.2005
RESEARCH ON INDIAN HERBS
Ponnuswamy Shri E.

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

- (a) whether the WHO has issued any guidelines for conducting research on Indian herbs including Neem, Amalaki, Haldi, Harar, etc;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government is aware that some Western Countries are conducting massive research on Indian herbs and are getting them patented;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the measures being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS)

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 457 FOR 27TH APRIL, 2005

(a) & (b) The World Health Organization has issued general guidelines for methodologies on research and evaluation of traditional medicines. The guidelines focus on safety and efficacy of traditional medicine and are intended to raise an answer of questions concerning evidence base. They apply to all traditional systems uniformly. The WHO has not issued guidelines for conducting research specific to Indian herbs.

(c) & (d) The traditional systems of medicine and drugs based on herbs are becoming increasingly popular all over the world. Patents have been granted for certain medicinal usages of some of the Indian medicinal plants in Western countries. However, there is no specific information that some Western countries are conducting massive research on Indian herbs and are getting them patented.

(e) In order to prevent the mis-appropriation of traditional knowledge relating to Indian herbs, Government is implementing a project called `Traditional Knowledge Digital Library `(TKDL). Under new project, the traditional knowledge about medicinal plants as described in the ancient literature is being transcribed in the five international languages, namely, English, German, French, Japanese and Spanish in a digital format. It is intended that the traditional knowledge could be accessed and verified with a non-disclosure agreement by the international patent offices at the time of scrutinizing and rejecting the patent applications.