

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1940
ANSWERED ON:08.03.2006
COMBATING ASBESTOSIS
Appadurai Shri M.

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

- (a) whether medical facilities and medicines are available for 'Asbestosis' disease in all Government Hospitals and Medical Centres in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the number of people died so far by 'Asbestosis' in the country; and
- (d) the steps being taken by the Government to safeguard the people from the said disease?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a) & (b): There is no curative treatment for asbestosis disease. However, supportive treatment is available in all Central Government Hospitals.

(c) As per the study conducted by ICMR's National Institute of Occupational Health, Ahmedabad in different mining and milling units of Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan showed that the prevalence of asbestosis in mining was 3% and in milling was 5% in Rajasthan and 21% in Andhra Pradesh. So far as asbestos cement industry is concerned the prevalence of asbestosis was 5% at Ahmedabad, 4.5% at Hyderabad, 3.9% at Coimbatore and 3% at Mumbai. In case of non-cement asbestos product manufacturing industry also, the prevalence was 9% for asbestosis. The information in regard to deaths due to asbestosis disease is not available.

(d): Asbestos handling industry is included in the list of industries involving hazardous processes under the first schedule of the Factories Act, 1948. Under the said Act there are sufficient provisions described in detail to safeguard safety and health of the workers. These provisions include measures such as guarding of machinery, personal protection, warning against eminent danger, monitoring of work environment, pre-employment and periodic medical checkup and maintenance of health records. This Act is enforced by the Chief Inspector of Factories under the Labour Department of the concerned State Governments. Apart from this, relevant provisions of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, and Air Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 are also important so far as the health and safety of workers of asbestos industries and surrounding population is concerned.