GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:317
ANSWERED ON:22.12.2004
REFRIGERATION FACILITY IN REMOTE AREAS
Jagannath Dr. M.

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

(a) whether the Government is aware that more than two million youngsters die every year from vaccine-preventable diseases like measles in the remote areas of the country due to non-availability of refrigeration facility for the preservation of live-saving vaccines;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government is also aware that more than fifty per cent of vaccines go waste in remote areas;

(d) if so, the details thereof including the reasons therefore;

(e) whether the Government has conducted any study to devise a technology which could eliminate the need for costly refrigeration of the vaccines; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

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

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 317 FOR 22ND DECEMBER, 2004

In 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004 (upto Aug) as per the report published by Central Bureau of Health Intelligence, the children that died due to measles are 85, 153, 119 and 116 respectively.

All the vaccines (including measles vaccine) are made available in multi dose vial and government policy does not allow any child to be refused vaccination from a multi-dose vial for the mere fear of vaccine wastage. Therefore, in routine immunization programme vaccine wastage has been allowed.

Government of India has been supplying Deep Freezers and Ice Lined Refrigerators for storing vaccine in the Districts upto the level of Primary Health Center (PHC). There is no shortage of any cold chain equipment for storing vaccine. No incidence has been reported to this Ministry of vaccine being wasted due to any cold chain failure.

Government of India have not conducted any study so far to device a technology which could eliminate the need for costly refrigeration of the vaccines. However, Cambridge Biostability, a British biotechnology firm is currently experimenting with the technique which eliminates the need for refrigeration. Using this technology clinical trials of this experimentation are likely to commence with a Pentavalent vaccine, which contains five vaccines in one namely: Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Hib and Hepatitis B.