

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:42

ANSWERED ON:25.07.2001

NON-IODISED SALT

ASHOK NAMDEORAO MOHOL;RAMSHETH THAKUR

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

- (a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned 'New Turn to Iodised Salt Controversy' appearing in the 'Hindu' dated May 8, 2001;
- (b) if so, the facts thereof;
- (c) whether the Government had lifted ban on consumption of non-iodised salt;
- (d) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (e) the impact of using non-iodised salt on the health of women in the reproductive age group and children; and
- (f) the steps taken by the Government to re-impose ban on consumption of non-iodised salt?

Answer

MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR)

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 42 FOR 25.7.2001

(a) Yes, Sir. The newspaper report stated that, while the Ministry of Health has removed the restriction on the sale of non-iodised salt for direct human consumption, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has directed the State Governments to use only iodised salt in their nutrition related programmes for women and children.

(b) Information received from the Department of Women and Child Development in the MHRD indicates that they have not issued any directions asking the State Governments to use only iodised salt in supplementary feeding programmes for children and women. Education of the community on beneficial effects of iodised salt through educational material, nutrition demonstration programmes, nutrition counselling etc. is an important activity taken up by the Food and Nutrition Board.

(c) The Central Government had removed the statutory requirement for compulsory sale of iodised salt for direct human consumption in all parts of the country from the PFA Rules, 1955, with effect from 30.9.2000. This measure ensures that a more informed decision will be taken by the State Governments on the question of statutory compulsion on sale of only iodised salt for direct human consumption in areas where it is felt necessary, based on the nutritional profile in different parts of their States.

(d) The resulting situation would ensure that in areas where the statutory compulsion is not considered necessary by the State Governments, there would be an adequate flexibility to permit the exercise of an informed choice on intake of either iodised or non-iodised salt, thus avoiding unnecessary compulsion in matters relating to public health. Even after the lifting of the Central statutory provision requiring compulsory sale of iodized salt for direct human consumption, all but four States - Kerala, Orissa, parts of Maharashtra and parts of Andhra Pradesh - are enforcing a statutory restriction under section 7 (iv) of the PFA Act, 1954.

(e) There is no adverse impacts on health per se due to consumption of non-iodised salt. However, vulnerable segments of the population like women in the reproductive age group and children, can benefit from intake of iodine either through salt or by any other mode.

(f) The Central Government is also undertaking a special drive of information, education and communication (IEC) in respect of the harmful effects on account of insufficient intake of iodine. With the continuing statutory compulsion on sale of iodized salt in all parts of country, wherever it is required, through the requisite notifications enforced by the State Governments, and supplemented by the more intensive IEC Campaign, there is no increased risk on account of iodine deficiency.