

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4011
ANSWERED ON:09.04.2003
LIFTING OF BAN ON NON-IODISED SALT
ALE NARENDRA

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

- (a) whether the Government have decided to lift the ban on the manufacture and sale of non-iodised salt in the country;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has expressed its serious concern on the decision of the Union Government; and
- (d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

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

(a) to (d): Through Central notification under the PFA Act, restriction had been placed on sale of salt for direct human consumption w.e.f. 27.5.1998, which has since been lifted w.e.f. 30.9.2000. Similar restriction, however, continues to be valid in most States/UTs through notifications issued by them under the powers given to States in this regard.

The restriction on sale of non-iodised salt for direct human consumption was imposed to promote the use of iodised salt for combating Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD). However, the Central notification was opposed by many segments of the population for a variety of reasons. The restriction was finally removed to provide for a system that allows adequate flexibility to accommodate those who believe that there should be no compulsion in matters relating to public health, and that the use of iodised salt to combat IDD should ideally be promoted through creation of greater awareness, by monitoring the accessibility, availability and affordability of this product.

The need for a statutory compulsion for sale of iodised salt is contingent upon the local social conditions, dietary habits and state of the economy. This aspect is best judged by the State Governments who are better aware of local conditions, and who can enforce the ban in such areas where the need is perceived. It was felt by the Central Government that the decision - whether or not to place a ban on sale of non-iodised salt, and if yes, in which areas - should be left to the State Governments. Consequently upon that, the Central Government withdrew its notification in this regard.

Compulsory iodisation is not the sole strategy available for promoting the use of iodised salt for combating IDD. Creation of greater awareness through IEC and increasing availability, affordability and accessibility are key factors in this regard, and Government proposes to focus on these aspects to achieve the same objective.