

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4121
ANSWERED ON:20.04.2005
ARGEMONE MEXICANA IN EDIBLE OILS
Vallabbhaneni Shri Balashowry

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that Argemone Mexicana has been found in edible oils in some parts of the country;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and the adverse impact of its consumption;
- (d) whether many deaths have taken place due to its consumption in some parts of the country;
- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) the steps taken /proposed to be taken in this regard?

Answer

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

(a) to (c) There have been reports of presence of Argemone mexicana in edible oils in the State of Uttar Pradesh. The regions effected are district Lucknow, in Lucknow region, District Kanpur in Kanpur region, District Gonda in Devi Pattan region, District Gorkhpur in Gorakpur region, District Firozabad in Agra region, District Bareilly in Bareilly region.

Three deaths have occurred in recent past in Lucknow city due to outbreak of dropsy resulting from consumption of edible oils adulterated with Argemone Mexicana.

(d) & (e): The State Government has intimated that strict surveillance is being undertaken and measures have been initiated to control the situation. A task force of specialist has been constituted to treat the patients effectively consisting of specialists of medicine, pathology and preventive medicine.

Under the Prevention of Food Adulteration (PFA) Rules, 1955, the standards of mustard oil already provide that it shall be free from argemone oil. The State/UTs Governments have been advised from time to time to keep a strict vigil on the quality of mustard oil and to take action as per PFA Rules, 1955, and to alert the public regarding the dangers of consuming adulterated mustard oil.