

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2545
ANSWERED ON:22.07.2009
DEATHS DUE TO POLLUTION
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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether as per the Report of the World Health Organisation (WHO), around five lakh persons, most of them women and children, are killed every year in India due to the pollution caused by burning of wood, coal and dung in rural areas;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABIAZAD)

(a) & (b) Burning of wood, coal and dung as fuel is the main cause for Indoor Air Pollution (IAP). According to a publication of WHO – Country Profile of Environmental Burden of Disease, published in 2009, the number of deaths due to exposure to Indoor Air Pollution is reported to be around 4,88,200 per year in India.

(c) The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) has been launched with a view to bringing about dramatic improvement in the health system and the health status of the people, especially those living in rural areas of the country. The Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) engaged in villages have been, inter-alia, assigned the duty of creating awareness among the masses about preventive health.

Sustained efforts are taken through vigorous health education campaign both at the Central and the State level to educate the people about cleaner fuels and improved ventilation with a view to end the threat posed by the Indoor Air Pollution. Most of these have focused on the introduction of more fuel efficient stoves instead of using the conventional open air chullas. More comprehensive approaches to encourage/improve ventilation, lifestyle changes and transition to cleaner burning fuels etc. are also advocated.