

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2110
ANSWERED ON:06.08.2010
MERCY KILLINGS
Mitra Shri Somendra Nath; Tagore Shri Manicka

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

- (a) whether a large number of applications/requests are pending with the Government for approval of mercy killings;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise for the last two years alongwith the reasons for such pendency;
- (c) the steps being taken by the Government for disposal of these applications;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to legalise the mercy killing; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and if not the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD)

(a) The subject matter regarding mercy killing has already been examined in this Ministry in the year 2003 and the Ministry has taken the position that mercy killing is not to be allowed for the following reasons:-

1. Hippocratic oath is against intentional/voluntary killing of the patient.
 2. Progression of medical science to relieve pain, suffering, rehabilitation and treatment of so-called incurable diseases will suffer a set back.
 3. An individual may wish to die at a certain point of time, his/her wish may not be persistent and only a fleeting desire out of transient depression.
 4. Suffering is a state of mind and perception, which varies from individual to individual and depends on various environmental and social factors.
 5. Continuous advancement in medical science has made possible good pain management in patients of cancer and other terminal illnesses. Similarly, rehabilitation helps many spinal injury patients in leading near normal life and euthanasia may not be required.
 6. Wish of euthanasia by a mentally ill patient/in depression may be treatable by good psychiatric care.
 7. It will be difficult to quantify suffering which may always be subject to changing social pressures and norms.
 8. Can doctors claim to have knowledge and experience to say that the disease is incurable and patient is permanently invalid?
 9. Defining of bed-ridden and requiring regular assistance is not always medically possible.
 10. There might be psychological pressure and trauma to the medical officers who would be required to conduct euthanasia.
- (b) Health is a State Subject. The data, is therefore, not maintained centrally.
- (c) Till date, Government has not permitted Euthanasia. Applications for the same cannot be entertained.
- (d) & (e) Do not arise.