

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3918
ANSWERED ON:26.08.2011
ASBESTOS HAZARD
Kishor Shri Kamal

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

- (a) whether Asbestos despite being hazardous to patients and environment is being used by industries in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has received complaints about deaths due to cancer and other life threatening diseases caused by Asbestos;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to tackle the situation?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY)

- (a) & (b): Presently only the chrysotile variety of asbestos is used in India in manufacture of asbestos cement products. The asbestos fibre levels are below the prescribed national and international norms and health hazards of use of chrysotile asbestos are yet to be proved.
- (c) & (d): Although no specific complaint has been received in the Department of Health Research, exposure to asbestos can lead to asbestosis, wherein there is a fibrosis of the lungs. It can also lead to mesothelioma (cancer of the lung).
- (e): Government has put in place various measures to safeguard the health of employees which, inter alia, included mandatory environmental clearance for asbestos based industries (new and expansion/modernization) irrespective of investment as per the provisions and procedures under Environment Impact Assessment Notification `1994. Strict adherence to medical health care, occupational health monitoring and compliance to various BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) standards are prescribed while granting clearance. Further, the Factories Act, 1948 contains stringent provision in regard to permissible exposure limit for Chrysotile asbestos as 1.0 fibre/CC.