

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:237

ANSWERED ON:09.12.2011

HARMFUL INGREDIENTS IN PAN MASALA

Ahir Shri Hansraj Gangaram;Bais Shri Ramesh

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

- (a) whether the Government has prescribed any standards and limits for various ingredients in Pan Masala and other smokeless tobacco products in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether tobacco and other harmful ingredients have been found in Pan masala and other smokeless tobacco products beyond standard/permissible level;
- (d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the action taken/proposed against the erring companies manufacturing these products; and
- (e) the steps taken/proposed to discourage consumption of these products and impose a ban on their sale in the country?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NAB1 AZAD)

(a)to (e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 237 FOR 9 DECEMBER, 2011

(a & b) There are currently no regulatory standards and limits prescribed by the Government for Pan Masala containing tobacco. However, the Bureau of Indian Standards has laid down standards for minced type chewing tobacco, flake type chewing tobacco (zarda) and quiwam. These standards, apart from other requirements, stipulate the following:

- 1) The material shall be free from any mould attack,
- 2) The material shall not contain any harmful substances and
- 3) Any substances, if added, shall be of a nature and purity which are suitable for use as food additives and as permitted under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Rules 1955 (The PFA Act, 1955, has since been replaced by the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, and the regulations therein).

Further, the safety standards of Pan Masala have been prescribed under clause 2.11.5 of Chapter 2 of the Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Regulation, 2011 (extract at Annexure). Regulation 2.3.4. of Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulations, 2011, provide that tobacco and nicotine shall not be used as ingredient in any food product.

(c) & (d) The implementation of Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 rests with the State/U.T. Governments. In this regard, random samples of various food articles including Pan Masala are drawn regularly by the State/U.T. Governments and penal action is taken against the offenders, in cases where samples are found to be not conforming to the provisions of the Act and Regulations and Rules made thereunder.

As per the direction of Hon`ble Supreme Court, National Institute of Public Health had undertaken a comprehensive analysis and study of the contents of gutkha, tobacco, pan masala and similar articles manufactured in the country and harmful effects of consumption of such articles. As per this report, substantive quantities of nitrosamines, Benzo(a)pyrene and heavy metals like lead, Arsenic, cadmium, Selenium, Nickel, Mercury, Chromium, etc are found in various smokeless tobacco products.

Government of India has also enacted ``The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act. 2003' (COTPA) to protect citizens, with special attention to risk groups such as pregnant women and children, from involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke, and to discourage consumption of cigarettes and other tobacco products including Pan Masala and Gutkha by imposing various regulatory measures as given under :

I. Ban on smoking in public places. (Section -4)

II. Ban on direct/indirect advertisement of tobacco products. (Section -5)

III. Ban on sale of tobacco products to children below 18 year and ban on sale of tobacco products within 100 yards of the educational institution. (Section- 6)

IV. Specified health warnings on tobacco products. (Section - 7)

In order to effectively implement COTPA, 2003 and the Rules made thereunder and to fulfil the obligations under the WHO-Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) has been launched in 42 Districts of 21 States. The programme broadly envisages-

National level

I. Public awareness/mass media campaigns for awareness building & for behavioral change.

II. Establishment of tobacco product testing laboratories, to build regulatory capacity, as required under COTPA, 2003.

III. Mainstreaming the program components as a part of the health delivery mechanism under the NRHM framework.

IV. Mainstream Research & Training - on alternate crops and livelihoods with other nodal Ministries.

V. Monitoring and Evaluation including surveillance e.g. Adult Tobacco Survey.

State level

i. Dedicated tobacco control cells for effective implementation and monitoring of Anti Tobacco Initiatives.

C. District level

I. Training of health and social workers, NGOs. school teachers etc.

II. Local IEC activities.

III. School programme

IV. Setting up tobacco cessation centres

V. Monitoring of tobacco control Act.

The matter relating to ban on smokeless tobacco products is before the Hon`ble Supreme Court in matter of Ankur Gutkha Vs. Indian Asthama Society.