

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4555  
ANSWERED ON:07.09.2012  
DISTRIBUTION OF THERAPEUTIC TABLETS UNDER NRHM  
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**Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether the Government proposes to distribute therapeutic tablets in schools under National Rural Health Mission (NRHM);
- (b) if so, the details thereof, State/UTwise and the total funds allocated/utilised for the purpose;
- (c) whether the Government has taken cognizance of a few cases of adverse effects of tablets distributed in various States; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof ?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD)

(a): Yes. However, it is not a new proposal under the School Health Programme.

(b): School Health Programme entails biannual health screening of diseases, deficiency and disability and linkages with secondary and tertiary health facilities whenever required, for children studying in Government, Government aided and Municipal schools.

Minimal prescription of therapeutic tablets is part of the School Health Programme under the National Rural Health Mission. Children under School Health Programme are given drugs out of Essential Drug list developed by State Governments for on the spot treatment of minor ailments during screening. The Essential Drug Lists are developed in consultation with experts.

To address nutritional anaemia amongst adolescents (including school children), Weekly Iron & Folic Acid Supplementation programme for adolescent Boys (in School 10-19 years) and Girls (in and out of school of 10-19 years) has been recently proposed to launch. This programme proposes supervised ingestion of Iron and Folic Acid supplementation (IFA) for 52 weeks and Tab. Albendazole (for deworming) biannually.

States request funds for programme implementation in yearly programme implementation plans. Allocation of funds is made for separate Programmes/components under National Rural Health Mission which includes School Health Programme, too. Separate allocation is not made for therapeutic tablets, hence, segregated allocation/expenditure specific to therapeutic tablets under School Health Programme is not expected.

Details of fund allocation and expenditure for School Health Programme and allocation for weekly Iron & Folic Acid Supplementation are annexed.

(c)& (d): In a few circumstances, IFA tablets may lead to some amount of nausea and vomiting when consumed empty stomach, A few cases of nausea and vomiting in case of IFA have been reported in Assam and in one case Mebendazole reaction, which was not confirmed.

To address the side effect in the form of nausea and vomiting, IFA tablets are to be ingested under direct supervision after Mid Day Meal and/or by ensuring that the child is not empty stomach. The Technical specifications of the IFA tablets have been modified to make them enteric coated to avoid nausea. Mass media based communication (radio, television and print) to educate public on the same, prior to the roll out of the Weekly Iron Folic Acid Supplementation programme, has been developed.