

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2446

ANSWERED ON:07.12.2012

HEALTH WARNINGS ON TOBACCO PRODUCTS

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

- (a) whether under the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), an international treaty signed and ratified by India, the countries are required to carry health warnings on all packages of tobacco products describing the harmful effects of tobacco use;
- (b) if so, whether the Government has taken note of the 'Cigarette Package Health Warnings: International Status Report' released recently at FCTC conference which ranks India 123 among 198 countries surveyed on the warnings parameter;
- (c) if so, the details thereof along with the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (d) the details of the obligations/ guidelines including standard area for health warnings on all packages of tobacco products under the FCTC along with the reasons for non-compliance of the same fully by the Government; and
- (e) the steps taken/proposed by the Government in this regard?

Answer

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

(a): Yes, the WHO-Framework Convention on Tobacco Control to which India is a party, recommends under Article 11 to adopt effective legal measures to ensure that each unit or package of tobacco product carry health warnings describing the harmful effects of tobacco use.

(b) & (c): Yes. The report provides an international overview of implementation of pictorial health warnings by ranking 198 countries based on warning size (average of front and back panel).

The current specification of the area of the pack warnings (40% of the principal display area of the front panel) is as per the directions of the Group of Ministers (GoM), which was constituted on the issue.

(d) & (e): The FCTC recommends that pack warnings should (i) be approved by competent authority (ii) shall be rotating (iii) shall be large, clear, visible and legible (iv) should be 50% or more of the principal display areas but shall be no less than 30% of the principal display areas, (v) may be in the form of or include pictures or pictograms.

Tobacco product packaging and labelling shall be in such a manner that it does not promote a tobacco product by any means that are false, misleading, deceptive or likely to create an erroneous impression about its characteristics, health effects, hazards or emissions. It prohibits the use of terms like "low tar", "light", "ultra-light", or "mild".

The current Rules relating to depiction of pictorial health warnings on tobacco product packages is compliant with most of the recommendations under Article 11 (Packaging and labeling of tobacco products) of WHO FCTC and the guidelines framed thereunder.

The Government has not taken any decision so far on the issue of changing the ratio of specification of the pictorial health warning vis-a-vis the principal display area of the tobacco product packs.