

Title: Need to take suitable steps to check the menace of indoor air pollution caused by cooking fuel.

SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE (JORHAT): Sir, indoor air pollution from the use of dirty cooking fuels has of late been a killer of children and women. The World Bank estimates that in India, indoor air pollution accounts for the death of at least half-a-million children under the age of five every year. But of this huge number, at least 3,00,000 do not live beyond the age of one year.

In India, outdoor air pollution take a toll of 84,000 deaths annually. Though this phenomenon commands more attention from policy makers, it is in fact a far smaller health threat than indoor air pollution which causes acute respiratory infection, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases and cardiovascular diseases.

A study conducted by the Mumbai-based International Institute for Population Studies had earlier indicated that women living in households, using wood and dung as cooking fuels, had a much higher prevalence of partial and complete blindness than women using cleaner fuels. Yet, strangely enough, according to another study conducted by the Planning Commission, the switch over to cleaner gaseous fuels does not keep pace with growth in income in rural areas, though Gordon Hughes and Meghan Dunleavy of World Bank reveal that the use of cleaner fuels like LPG is the second most important factor in reducing child mortality in rural areas. The situation is worse compounded by the failure of smokeless chullahs due to operational and installation defects.

The situation poses a great challenge to the Government which must engage in a serious effort to handle the problem by creating better awareness and more improved mechanism.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I understand that Col. Sona Ram Choudhary's statement has departed from the original text which was submitted. As per the approved text only, it will be on record.

COL. (RETD.) SONA RAM CHOUDHARY (BARMER): It is in respect of the last line only. Can we not add one or two lines?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The approved text will be there.

COL. (RETD.) SONA RAM CHOUDHARY : Thank you.

