

bers' health also.

[*English*]

Alarming Increase in spurious Drugs

*9. SHRI PRAKASH V. PATIL: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether over the past few years there has been an alarming increase in spurious drugs all over the country;

(b) whether Government are aware of the consequent increase in the case of ill-effects of such drugs, resulting even in deaths, if so, Statewise details of such cases;

(c) whether Government propose to provide in the relevant law death penalty in cases of death resulting from use of spurious drugs; and

(d) if so, when such a legislation is proposed to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI MOTI LAL VORA): (a) On the basis of information received from the States, 48 out of 18,504 samples of drugs tested in 1984-85, 32 out of 19,035 samples tested in 1985-86 and 72 out of 28,382 samples tested in 1986-87 were found to be spurious.

(b) Government have not received any such reports from the State Governments.

(c) and (d). No such proposal is under consideration. Section 27 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, as amended in 1982, already provides for the penalty of life imprisonment in respect of manufacture, stocking or sale of spurious drugs resulting in or likely to result in death.

[*Translation*]

SHRI PRAKASH V. PATIL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is hardly any State in the

country where the use of spurious drugs has not resulted in deaths. But it is a matter of regret that so far no offender has been awarded capital punishment, not even in Delhi. The Chairman of Narcotics Board, Shri Kumar has stated that Narcotics Act will be amended to check smuggling of narcotics so that 15 years imprisonment could be awarded for the first offence and capital punishment for second offence. My question to the Government is that why should we not make such a provision for spurious drug manufacturers also, so that the term of imprisonment in their case could also be enhanced. Is the Government thinking in terms of bringing a new bill? So far as the question of foreign countries is concerned, no such cases are seen there. I want to know the reasons why such inhuman acts continue to be committed in our country?

SHRI MOTI LAL VORA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, with regard to the points raised by the hon. Member, I would like to say that the figures in respect of all States are with me and, of these samples, very small number was found to be spurious. Therefore, there is no proposal before the Government to amend the existing Act. The Act, as amended in 1982, already provides for the penalty of life imprisonment in respect of manufacture, stocking or sale of spurious drugs. As such, there is no need for further amendment. However, as I said earlier, information about spurious drugs is received through the State Governments. No such information has been received by the centre from any State. We are writing to them regularly because it is a very serious matter and most of the hon. Members have expressed their concern about it. We shall write to State Government about it and shall also arrange a meeting in order to have a serious discussion on it.

SHRI PRAKASH V. PATIL: Many people sell medicine in black market in order to avoid payment of excise and other taxes because the rate of excise duty is as high as 300 per cent. Will the Department of Health and the Department of Finance consider bringing forward a new legislation to control

this malpractice? Will the Government consider evolving a clear cut policy under which a lower rate of taxation for the poor and a higher rate of taxation for the rich could be provided?

SHRI MOTI LAL VORA: The Government ensures availability of medicines on control rates under the national programme. Category I medicines are made available on control price. We had considered this issue last time also and the Government has constituted an expert committee for the purpose. After the expert committee submits its report, we are going to consider which of the medicines used by the poor could be made available in the market on 'control price' under the national programme.

[English]

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: During the last Session, in reply to my question, the Minister of State for Health, Kumari Saroj Khaparde, had assured that the Bombay Medical Store under the administrative control of the Union Health Ministry had actually sent a number of drugs which were below standard. They were substandard drugs and some of them were sent to certain hospitals even though the letter of intent was not there. The Minister of State had assured in reply to my question that all concerned will be subjected to a serious inquiry and results of the inquiry will be placed on the Table of the House. I would like to know whether that inquiry has been conducted and what are the findings of the inquiry.

SHRI MOTI LAL VORA: Regarding the supplies from the Bombay Medical Store, in the last Session, the Government has replied. So, as the Member has desired, we will come out with the report and we will inform the hon. Member.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Child Labour

*1. **SHRI V. KRISHNA RAO:** Will the

Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been any decrease in child labour in the country during the last two years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, what steps other than legislation are being taken by Union Government to curb child labour?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI BINDESHWARI DUBEY): (a) to (c). It is not possible to maintain figures regarding number of child workers in the country on a yearly basis.

The number of child labour in the country can only be ascertained either by a regular census or by a comprehensive and representative sample survey. The census of India is decennial while the figures on the basis of surveys carried out by National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) are available every 5 years. As far as the statistics pertaining to child labour are concerned, National Sample Survey (NSS) is considered more reliable because the questionnaire used for the purpose is more comprehensive as compared to the one used for census of India. It is not possible to say whether there has been any increase or decrease in the number of child workers during the last two years because the last round of National Sample Survey (38th Round) was conducted with reference to 1983 and the last census was with reference to 1981. However, it is possible to compare the figures regarding the estimated number of working children (in the age group 5 to 14 years) in 1977-78 and 1986 on the basis of the 32nd and 38th rounds of the National Sample Survey. The figures of child labour in 1986 are estimated on the basis of the figures of population of the relevant age group as projected by the Expert Committee on Population Projections and using the work participation rate as ascertained by the 38th round of N.S.S. These figures are as follows:-