

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS & FERTILIZERS
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMICALS & PETROCHEMICALS

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 428
TO BE ANSWERED ON 01.04.2022

Use of Asbestos in Chemical and Petrochemical Sector

*428. SHRI KULDEEP RAI SHARMA:

SHRI KANUMURU RAGHU RAMA KRISHNA RAJU:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state

- (a) the details of different types of asbestos being procured and used in chemical and petrochemical products and other associated industries in the country;
- (b) the types of asbestos that are banned and not banned in the country as on date;
- (c) the stand of Indian Government in international fora on non-banned asbestos;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to impose complete ban on the use of all types of asbestos and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the steps taken/being taken for safe use of asbestos in the chemical and petrochemical sector; and
- (f) whether any study has been conducted regarding the hazardous impact of asbestos on human health and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS

(DR. MANSUKH MANDAVIYA)

(a) to (d): There are six known varieties of Asbestos, namely, Crocidolite, Actinolite, Anthophyllite, Amostile, Tremolite and Chrysotile. Out of these varieties of asbestos, Chrysotile is majorly used in chemical and petrochemical sector.

Government of India has not banned the use of any type of asbestos in the country. The Crocidolite, Actinolite, Anthophyllite, Amostile, Tremolite varieties of asbestos are listed in Annexure-III (List of certain hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides) of the Rotterdam Convention and are subject to Prior Information Consent (PIC) procedure by the exporting country for the imports to India. However, the Chrysotile asbestos is not included in Annexure-III of the Rotterdam Convention and is imported without any prior consent.

However, the pollution emanating from industries/activities engaged in use of asbestos, is regulated through revised emission standards for 'Asbestos Based Products Manufacturing Industries' notified in March, 2006 by Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change under Environmental (Protection) First Amendment Rules, 2006. Further, the 'General Emission Standards – Part D' notified under the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986 also prescribe concentration based limits of asbestos. All these standards are enforced through the State Pollution control Boards/Pollution Control Committees and are monitored by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

In India, most of the asbestos industry follow the wet processes which minimizes the dispersion of fibres in the air. Therefore, Government of India has not advocated listing of Chrysotile asbestos in Annexure III of the Rotterdam convention in the meeting of Conference of Parties (CoPs) to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions.

(e) The safe use of Asbestos is regulated as follows:

- (i) The First Schedule under Section 2 (cb) of the Factories (Amendment) Act, 1987 enlists Industries involving hazardous process wherein the asbestos fibre related work in asbestos cement product industries is identified as "Hazardous Process".
- (ii) Under Section 41C of the Factories (Amendment) Act, 1987 the Occupier of the factory is assigned to specific responsibility in relation to hazardous process. It involves:
 - a. Maintenance and update of health record of workers.
 - b. Medical examination of every worker.
 - c. Appointment of competent person.
- (iii) According to the Third Schedule and section 89 of the Factories Act, Asbestosis comes under the list of Notifiable Occupation Diseases. It is also compensable under the Employee's Compensation Act, 1923 and Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948.
- (iv) The occupier of the factory carrying a 'Hazardous Process' shall provide and maintain in good order in Occupational Health Centre with the service and facilities as per scale laid down under Factories Act.
- (v) Model Rules are framed by Directorate General Factory Advice Service and Labour Institutes (DGFASLI) under the Factories Act. Schedule XIV of Model Rules under Section 87 on "Handling and Processing of Asbestos, Manufacture of any Article or Substance of Asbestos and any other Processes of Manufacture or otherwise in which Asbestos is used in any Form", provides the detailed guidelines on various aspects of safety and health for asbestos handling. The

Factories Act, 1948 and the State Factories Rules framed thereunder are enforced by the respective State Governments.

(f) DGFASLI under the Ministry of Labour and Employment, carried out a “National Study on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Environment in Asbestos Cement Product Industries” from November, 2018 to February, 2019 covering 50 functional asbestos cement product industries of the country. Out of 2603 workers, 10 cases were found to be suspected cases of asbestos related disorders. The concentration of airborne fibres in industries where inbuilt environmental control measures are in place and good practices followed, were found to be quite low as compared to those units where such measures are unavailable. It was also found that the airborne levels of asbestos fibres in 35 industries were well within the permissible limit of exposure i.e. 0.1 fibre/cc and the concentration of asbestos fibre exceeded the permissible limit in 15 industries, where it ranged from 0.185 to 0.400 fibre/cc.
