

and decided to revoke the suspension on 23.04.2009 from all the sites except the inspected site. Further, the monitor and investigator of the inspected site also submitted details of corrective action taken by them, based on which the suspension from the inspected site was also revoked on 02.06.2009.

Relaxation to OBC students for admission to MBBS

2329. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA:
SHRI LALIT KISHORE CHATURVEDI:

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

(a) whether Medical Council of India has prescribed 50 per cent of marks for General category candidates for qualifying examination as well as entrance examination, and 40 per cent of marks for candidates belonging to SC/ST categories for admission to MBBS course;

(b) whether for admission of SC and ST students in the All India quota reservation at the rate of 15 per cent and 7-1/2 per cent respectively has been introduced from the academic year 2008-09;

(c) whether on above pattern, any relaxation and quota have been provided for OBC students; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) Yes.

(b) The 15% reservation for SC and 7.5% reservation for ST is being implemented under 15% All India Quota from academic year 2007-08.

(c) and (d) The cut off marks for OBC candidates is 40 percent and 27% reservation has been provided under 15% All India Quota in the Central Medical Colleges from the academic year 2009-10 onwards.

Patent of medicinal plants

2330. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:
SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that we lost more than 15,000 patents of our medicinal plants to the West;

(b) if so, how many such patents were opposed during the last five years;

(c) the number where our claims were upheld; and

(d) whether the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library, containing documentation of over two lakh medical formulations will safeguard our interests in future?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) to (c) In a study carried out in the year 2000 by the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)

Task Force appointed by the Government, 4896 patent references were found on the medicinal plants at the international level which increased to 15,000 in the year 2003. However, in a study carried out in the year 2005, the number of patents found on medicinal plants at a global level were 35,587. After successfully fighting the wrong patents granted at United States Patents and Trademarks Office (USPTO) on turmeric and basmati, and at European Patent Office (EPO) on neem, traditional Knowledge Digital Library database has been created, since fighting the wrong patents at International Patent Offices is expensive and time consuming. TKDL establishes prior art for approximately 2.04 lakh formulations transcribed in five international languages, namely, English, French, German, Spanish and Japanese and prevents the grant of wrong patents, if claimed at the International Patent Offices.

The access to TKDL database has been given to the European Patent Office in February, 2009 for its use in search and examination process so that wrong patents are not granted. Efforts are being made to give access to the TKDL database to other major patent offices also so as to prevent the grant of wrong patents in these offices also.

(d) Yes.

‘Clusters’ for promotion of medicinal plants

2331. SHRI N.K. SINGH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has decided to develop ‘clusters’ across the country on the lines of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to promote medicinal and herbal plants;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the locations have been identified where such clusters would be developed and State Governments agreed to provide necessary infrastructure, etc.; and

(d) if so, to what extent the growth of medicinal and herbal plants is expected during the next few years?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) and (b) Government has approved a Central Sector Scheme *viz* “Scheme for Development of AYUSH Clusters.” Objectives of the scheme are:—

(i) To fill in the critical gaps in the sector especially related to standardization, quality assurance and control, productivity, marketing, infrastructure and capacity building through a cluster based approach.

(ii) To encourage the level of organization in the sector thereby creating social capital for sustainability of collective initiatives.

Financial assistance upto a maximum of Rs. 10 crores is admissible to each cluster for setting up quality testing laboratory and common processing facilities and thereby impart quality and standardization in the AYUSH sector. Government has also approved a scheme *viz*.