

Levels of contaminants in food products

1485. SHRI TARUN VIJAY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the levels of different contaminants viz, naturally occurring toxins, persistent organic pollutants and heavy metals in food according to any Government report/sample survey of food;

(b) the internationally accepted levels of these toxins according to various international standards and conventions; and

(c) what are the WHO policies for the same and how Government proposes to promote the safety of food, covering entire food chain from production to consumption?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI SUDIP BANDYOPADHYAY): (a) to (c) The safety limits of different contaminants, viz. naturally occurring toxins and heavy metals in food have been prescribed in Chapter II of Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Regulations, 2011.

Internationally accepted levels of these toxins, persistent organic pollutants and heavy metals etc. are available in the Codex Standards, which are developed by Codex Alimentarius Commission [Joint body of World Health Organization (WHO) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Food Standard Programme].

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India is giving wide publicity about food safety to all stake holders through radio, television and news papers on a regular basis.

Survey on extent of drug abuse

1486. SHRI B.S. GNANADESIKAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) plans to conduct a nationwide survey to assess the extent of drug abuse in various parts of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the survey being undertaken will assess the number of drug users in the country, quantity of drug used segments in which it is widely prevalent and the kind of help provided by rehabilitation centres; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) to (d) The NSSO has informed that it does not have any plan to conduct such survey. However, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, which is the nodal Ministry in respect of the problem of drug and alcohol abuse has informed that NSSO carried out a Pilot Survey on the extent, pattern and trends of drug abuse in the cities of Amritsar, Imphal and Mumbai in March-April, 2010 with

the objective of testing the efficacy of the sampling design and survey instrument, which may be adopted for the National Survey. It was observed from the draft report of the Pilot Survey that it does not give the realistic picture of the prevalence of drug abuse due to various reasons. NSSO has been requested by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to carry out an advanced pilot survey for 3 States viz. Punjab, Maharashtra and Manipur. The detailed National Survey to gauge the extent, pattern and trends of drug abuse in the country is to be taken up by the Ministry of Social Justice and empowerment after reviewing the report of the advanced pilot survey in three States.

HIV/AIDS Bill

1487. DR. T.N. SEEMA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) the current status of the HIV/AIDS Bill and the timeline for introducing the Bill in the Parliament;
- (b) the reasons for the delay in tabling the Bill; and
- (c) the action Government has taken in the absence of legislation to address the issue of discrimination in private and public health facilities towards people living with HIV?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI S. GANDHISELVAN): (a) and (b) The draft of the Bill is under consideration. The response to the evolving HIV epidemic in the country necessitated some contextual changes from the initial proposal.

- (c) Action taken by the Government in this regard includes the following:-
 - (i) Government has initiated intensive advocacy and sensitization among doctors, nurses and other paramedical workers so that People Living with HIV/AIDS are not discriminated, stigmatized or denied of services.
 - (ii) A directive was issued by National AIDS Control Organization (NACO) on 26th August, 2008, on comprehensive ART Centers. The directive provides guidelines for enhancing the extent and efficacy of treatment administered to HIV positive persons. All State AIDS Control Societies (SACS) were directed to ensure that “all doctors, nurses, hospital staff shall treat HIV positive persons in a professional and humane manner’ with dignity and care”. Further, it must be ensured that there is no “stigma” or “discrimination” at health care facilities or otherwise. The cases of “denial of services” to HIV positive persons should initiated in all such cases. As per this directive, all States have established “State Grievance Redressal Committees” to address to various issues related to Care, Support and Treatment including stigma, discrimination and denial.