

Inequity in medicine access

*78. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that drug access for poor communities in the country has not improved;

(b) whether it is also a fact that since the introduction of Drug Price Control Orders, access to medicines in class II to IV towns has actually declined;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the inequity in medicine access is widely perceived as symptomatic of weaknesses in the healthcare system and represents a failure on the part of Government to fulfil its obligations towards the citizens in terms of their right to health; and

(d) if so, the steps Government is taking to address these concerns?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) and (b) Access to quality health care is a challenge in a developing country like India. According to an estimate, upto 79% cost of health care in rural areas is due to cost of medicines. There is no report to the effect that since the introduction of Drug Price Control Orders, access to medicines in class II to IV towns has declined.

(c) and (d) Government of India has been supplying various types of vaccines, anti-malarial and anti-tuberculosis drugs free of cost to all at the public health facilities. In addition, Government launched Janani Sishu Suraksha Karyakaram in June 2011, under which all pregnant mothers and sick neonates upto 30 days are entitled to free treatment which includes free drugs and consummables, free blood, diagnostics, free diet and free transport. The Twelfth Five Year Plan envisages supply of free generic medicines to all accessing public health institutions.

Health care facilities for Bhopal gas leak victims

*79. SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 50 per cent of Bhopal Gas leak victims are suffering from abnormal lung function, as per the researchers of Bhopal Memorial Hospital and Research Centre;