

from 193 samples indicate that 145 samples have passed the purity test while 48 samples have shown 0.2% average shortage of marked purity.

(b) BIS has notified a quality assurance standard (IS:1417) for gold jewellery. This standard is only a voluntary standard. Therefore, it is not incumbent on jewellers to sell gold jewellery that adheres to this standard.

To encourage jewellers to sell gold jewellery that adheres to IS:1417, BIS introduced the hallmarking scheme in 2000 under which gold jewellers are encouraged to take license from BIS. This license allows jewellers to use the hallmark which is a certificate of the purity of the gold. As on 31/3/2015, 14,031 jewellers have obtained license to sell hallmarked jewellery. However, a gold jeweller who is a licensee under the scheme can display and sell both hallmarked as well as non-hallmarked jewellery as this is only a voluntary scheme. Under the scheme, a licensed jeweller is required to get his jewellery duly tested and certified in the approved Hallmarking and Assaying Centre before marking the hallmark on the jewellery. As on 31/3/2015, BIS has approved 331 Hallmarking and Assaying Centres across the country. Under the Hallmarking Scheme there is a provision for imposition of penalty on the Hallmarking and Assaying Centre and payment of compensation to the consumer by the jeweller, in case the purity of hallmarked jewellery sold is found less than the marked purity.

(c) and (d) Under the Hallmarking Scheme, no jeweller has been booked for selling impure gold hallmarked jewellery during the last three years. Both the Department of Consumer Affairs, under its “Jago Grahak Jago” campaign, as well as the BIS undertake publicity campaign including advertisements in print and electronic media to create awareness amongst consumers on the importance of buying hallmarked jewellery.

Effect of electromagnetic radiation from cellphone towers

*147. SHRI DEVENDER GOUD T.: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has given its approval to conduct research on effects of electromagnetic radiation from cellphone towers in the country on human and animal health, if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether it is also a fact that similar researches were conducted by Tata Memorial Centre and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR); and

(c) if so, whether it is not duplicity, if so, the reasons for such a study?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) Yes Sir, Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), a statutory body under Department of Science and Technology has called proposals for scientific investigations of radiation hazards and risk potentials from Mobile Towers and Handsets on Life (humans, living organisms, flora & fauna and environment) and related Research & Development (R&D) initiatives. The SERB has constituted an Expert Committee/Task Force comprising of various experts from Medical & Engineering Institutes which has short listed 19 research proposals for further consideration of support and funding jointly by SERB and Department of Telecommunications (DoT). These include proposals from All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs).

World Health Organization (WHO) has referred to approximately 25,000 articles published around the world over past 30 years, and based on an in-depth review of scientific literature, has concluded: "current evidence does not confirm the existence of any health consequences from exposure to EMF radiation". However, Government is conscious about the public concern related to the possible potential health effect of electromagnetic radiation from cell phone towers in the country and has decided to conduct India specific studies/research in this field.

(b) and (c) No such research has been conducted by Tata Memorial Center. The Expert Committee constituted by SERB for evaluating and short listing the research proposals, comprise of members from various scientific organizations that are sponsoring research in this area, including Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). Therefore during the evaluation/selection process of these proposals, efforts have been made to avoid duplication with ongoing research in this area in the country.

Unhygienic condition of railway stations

*148. SHRIMATI JHARNA DAS BAIDYA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the unhygienic condition of railway stations in the country;

(b) whether any surprise checks have been conducted to improve the condition of these stations;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken by Government to maintain hygiene and cleanliness at the said stations?