

shall not be less than 10 years but which may extend to imprisonment for life and shall also be liable to fine or one lakh rupees or upto 3 times the value of the goods seized, whichever is higher.

(2) Penalties for subsequent offences to be enhanced upto 10 years and with fine which shall not be less than one lakh rupees.

(3) Offences relating to spurious or adulterated drugs to be made non-bailable and cognizable.

(4) Provision for setting up of special courts to try offences of spurious or adulterated drugs.

(5) To confer powers upon police officers not below the rank of sub-inspector or other designated officer to institute prosecutions under the said Act.

The proposed amendments will make the law deterrent to the offenders involved in the manufacture or sale of spurious drugs. The involvement of enforcing agencies like police will help in speedy investigations to look the culprits and in controlling anti-social elements involved in such activities.

Fiourosis Disease in Andhra Pradesh

1877. SHRI SUDARSHAN AKARAPU: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that several districts particularly Nalgonda district in A. P. are plagued by "Fiourosis" disease;

(b) if so, the steps Government have taken to contain the disease;

(c) whether any financial assistance has been rendered to the State Government to help tackle the disease; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (d) According to ICMR that 16 districts out of 23 districts in the State of Andhra Pradesh including Nalgonda district are endemic with Fluorosis. The Government of Andhra Pradesh has reported that 397 villages of Nalgonda district are affected by Fluorosis. (Medical camps are carried

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RAJYASABHA

out, and persons suffering from fluorosis are indentified and provided necessary drugs. Action is taken by them to spread awareness among people for prevention of fluorosis).

Fluorosis is combated by provision of safe drinking water. Provision of safe drinking water is a state subject. However, Government of India supplements the efforts of the State Governments/Union Territories by providing funds under the Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) and Prime Minister's Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY)—Rural Drinking Water for tackling quality related problems and sustainability issues in respect of rural drinking water supply. Department of Drinking Water Supply sanctioned 56 sub-mission projects in Andhra Pradesh between the years 1992 and 1998 with an approved cost of Rs. 571 crores out of the Government of India share was Rs. 428 crores under Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana.

Anti-AIDS Drug Prices

1878. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any decision has been taken to constitute a working group including members from Pharmaceutical Industry to chalk-out a strategy to reduce Anti-AIDS Drug prices in India, in order to make these costly drugs available at cheaper rate;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether Government would form such a working group immediately, as the incurable AIDS disease has become a great menace to the entire nation, for which reducing the costly Anti-AIDS drugs to a much cheaper rate, is the only solution for the survival of AIDS patients for a longer period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

A Working Group was constituted under the charmanship of Union Health Secretary including the members of Pharmaceutical Industries to chalk out a strategy to reduce the Anti-AIDS drug prices in India.