

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 815
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.02.2017

Impact of Mercury

815. SHRI BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of the extensive use of highly toxic mercury in the healthcare and lighting sectors in the country;
- (b) if so, the details and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) whether the Government has conducted any study to ascertain the ill effects of mercury on human health and environment in the country;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Government has signed the Minamata Agreement, a global treaty to protect the human health and environment from the adverse effects of mercury; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof along with the other steps taken by the Government in this regard?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE)

- (a) & (b) The Government has taken note of the use of mercury in the healthcare and lighting sector in the country. Major use of mercury in the healthcare sector are in dental amalgam, medical devices such as thermometers and sphygmomanometers. Whereas in lighting sector, mercury is used in Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs).

Recognizing the adverse impact of mercury on health and environment, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW) has notified the Clinical Establishment Act, 2010 which has been adopted so far by 14 States and Union Territories (UTs).

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW) has also issued guidelines for phase-out of mercury containing Blood Pressure (BP) instruments i.e sphygmomanometers and thermometers, and for reducing environmental pollution due to mercury originating from hospitals and health centers. Mercury content in CFL is also regulated under the e-Waste (Management) Rules, 2016 notified by the Government.

(c) & (d) No such specific study has been undertaken by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

(e) & (f) The Government of India signed the Minamata Convention on Mercury on 30 September, 2014. This Convention on Mercury is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury through reduction of mercury emissions from all sources, including gold mining, dental practices, chlor-alkali plants, coal combustion, medical uses as well as waste management, storage, fate and transport in the atmosphere and other related issues.

India has taken up the process of Mercury Initial Assessment (MIA) as a step towards exploring the possibility of ratification of the Minamata Convention and establishing a national foundation to undertake future work towards the implementation of the Convention. Accordingly, a project viz. "Improve Mercury Management in India", is being taken up to create a national mercury profile, including significant sources of emissions and releases, as well as inventories of mercury and mercury compounds.
