History of use

- Using for over 70 years
- Major commercial use started since 1970s and grew by 300% in next 30 years
- Between 1960s-2008-cumulative consumption in excess of 7 million tonnes
- Over 90% consumption is of chrysotile (white) asbestos

Production

- India mostly imports ‘white’ asbestos: Russia and Canada
- Import-3,28,568 MT (2008); 3,22,200 MT (2009); 4,08,430 MT (2010) (USGS)
- Major consumption in asbestos cement industry
- 17 major asbestos cement companies- 61 manufacturing factories (organised sector)
- Production of asbestos cement products in 2007-2008 estimated at 37 lakh metric tonnes
- Growth (2007-08) -16.5% (sales increased)
- Annual turnover of asbestos cement industry is Rs 3000 crores approx.
- Manufacture of brake lining & textiles plants
- India has asbestos mines in Rajasthan (tremolite) and Cuddapah-AP (chrysotile)
- Mines contribute 10% to the production
- 100,000 workers (unofficial estimation), millions in construction-informal work
- Importing deaths: Ship-breaking industry

Condition of production & use

- Mining: The asbestos hills of Roro, Chaibasa, Jharkhand.
- Cuddapah chrysotile mines, Andhra Pradesh
• Rajasthan Tremolite mines

Imported asbestos

“imported” asbestos waste
“Poor” woman’s construction material?

Lack of data: Does it mean problem doesn’t exist?
- Lack of data and reporting; suppression of data/info.; NIOH refused information to Rajasthan miners
- No real estimation of number of workers engaged in handling asbestos-mines/mills/factories/end-producers/users/waste
- 44 cases of ESI compensation till date-govt records
- Independent studies have found prevalence of diseases: Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharasstra
- Tata Cancer Memorial (1985-2005): 137 cases of Mesothelioma, Gujarat Cancer 47 cases

Politics and policies
- Industry-government nexus; GOI run factory
- 57 asbestos product factories given EC 2000-09; 12 after 2009; many more in pipeline
- Rooted in domestic politics: Memb of Parl.
- Fiscal incentive in 5 year plan/import duty/OGL/De-licensed
- Scientific fraud: NIOH, IBM, CPCB (MOC Study)
- Legal intimidations; media propaganda
- Consortium of Indian investors to reopen Jeffery mines in Canada

The missing victims!

The missing victims!

Problems in organising victims
- Most of the workers in the unorganised sector: contract workers, daily wagers, migrant workers
- Difficult to locate and identify
- Problems in medical diagnosis; establishing occupational history
- Filing for compensation-who to hold liable, no fixed employer
- Tedious labour laws
- Difficulties in holding companies liable

Some hope for Justice!
- HCL workers-T&N Trust, UK
- Gujarat Composite/AEC workers-ESI/Manville Trust
- Rajasthan-HC case, NIOH
- Struggles of villagers against asbestos plants: Bihar (Marwan-Mfpr, Mahua) and Orissa (Visaka Cement, Sambalpur dist.; Bargad dist.)
- Mesothelioma Registry: TISS/BARC, Tata Cancer, ICMR
- Recent MOEF doc: India to ban asbestos??