Asbestos cement products are absolutely safe'

Does asbestos pose a health hazard as is widely believed? Asbestos fibre can be an occupational health risk only when it becomes airborne and its dust is inhaled in excessive amounts over a prolonged period. There's no risk when dust control procedures are in operation or when the exposure is stray.

Jacques Dunnigan
Scientist & Researcher in Asbestos
On myths surrounding the use of asbestos products

Cement locks asbestos fibres firmly within the matrix in chrysotile asbestos cement products. Hence they cannot escape into the atmosphere under normal conditions of use, posing no risk.

When western data indicates otherwise, how do you justify the use of chrysotile asbestos in India? Western studies are chiefly on exposure of all types of asbestos fibres, products manufactured in dry process during the period of relative ignorance about asbestos health hazards. Dust levels measured in the workplace were of the order of hundreds of fibres/cc of air. Occurrence of these diseases today is due to heavy exposure in the past and long latent periods to manifest. In India, only chrysotile fibre is used to manufacture asbestos cement products and exposure levels are less than 1 fibre/cc – 50 to 100 times lower than exposures in the past in western countries.

What is the relevance of chrysotile asbestos cement sheets in India?

Chrysotile asbestos cement sheets have a life of 50 plus years. The low costs are unmatched by any roofing product.

E Surjit