

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION
RAJYA SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1698

ANSWERED ON 18.12.2023

REDUCING ARSENIC AND FLUORIDE LEVELS IN GROUNDWATER

1698#. SHRI RAM NATH THAKUR

Will the Minister of **JAL SHAKTI** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the levels of arsenic and fluoride in groundwater have increased in the country;
- (b) the States where the elements of arsenic and fluoride are present in water;
- (c) the steps taken by Government to reduce the impact of such arsenic and fluoride laden water in the last five years; and
- (d) the details of funds released under this head in Bihar for the last five years?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI BISHWESWAR TUDU)

(a) Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) generates ground water quality data of the country on a regional scale as part of its ground water quality monitoring program and various scientific studies. These studies indicate the occurrence of Arsenic and Fluoride in ground water beyond permissible limits (as per BIS) for human consumption in isolated pockets in various States / UTs. Arsenic has been reported in parts of 230 districts in 25 States and in parts of 469 districts in 27 states fluoride contamination is found. The ground water contamination reported by CGWB is mostly geogenic in nature and does not show significant change over the years.

(b) The states where the elements of Arsenic and Fluoride are present in water are given in **Annexure**.

(c) Water being a state subject, the responsibility of ground water management, including taking initiatives for improving ground water quality and mitigate the contamination issue, lies primarily with the state governments. However, several steps have also been taken by the Central Government in this regard. Some of them are given at succeeding paras.

- i. CGWB is successfully constructing Arsenic free wells in arsenic affected areas, mainly in the states of West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar using the cement sealing technology for tapping contamination free aquifers and also providing technical assistance to state departments in Fluoride mitigation.
- ii. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in association with State Pollution Control Boards/Pollution Control Committees (SPCBs/PCCs) is implementing the provisions of the Water (Prevention & Control) Act, 1974 and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to prevent and control pollution in water.

- iii. Government of India, in partnership with States, is implementing Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) since August, 2019 to provide potable tap water supply of prescribed quality and on regular & long-term basis to every rural household in the country. Under JJM, while planning water supply schemes to provide tap water supply to house-holds, priority is given to quality-affected habitations. While allocating the funds to States/ UTs in a particular financial year, 10% weightage is given to the population residing in habitations affected by chemical contaminants. Since, planning, implementation and commissioning of piped water supply schemes based on a safe water source may take time, purely as an interim measure, States/ UTs have been advised to install community water purification plants (CWPPs) in such habitations, to provide potable water to every household at the rate of 8–10 litre per capita per day (lpcd) to meet their drinking and cooking requirements.
- iv. Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation had launched a National Water Quality Sub-Mission (NWQSM) on 22nd March, 2017 as a part of National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP), which has now been subsumed under JJM, to provide safe drinking water to 27,544 arsenic/fluoride affected rural habitations in the country.
- v. The Public Health Engineering Department of Bihar (PHED) has conducted extensive surveys in the state to identify Arsenic and Fluoride affected areas and as per the data available, parts of 50 Blocks in 13 Districts of the State are affected by Arsenic contamination and in parts of 98 Blocks in 11 Districts Fluoride has been detected.
- (d)** To mitigate the problem of ground water contamination, Government of India in partnership with States, is implementing Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) - Har Ghar Jal, since 2019 with the aim to enable every rural household in the country, to have assured potable water, in adequate quantity of prescribed quality on regular and long-term basis, through tap water connection during the mission period. Under this Scheme, an amount of Rs. 14,001.62 Cr has been allocated to Bihar for providing safe drinking water to the rural households of the state.

Further, Bihar Region of CGWB under this ministry has been allocated Rs.29.26 crores in the last 5 years under Ground Water Management & Regulation(GWM&R) Scheme under which activities like aquifer mapping, ground water level and quality monitoring, ground water resource assessment etc. are taken up which are immense importance in identifying safe and potential aquifers. Out of the allocated fund, an expenditure of about 8.6 crores has been incurred for the construction of arsenic free well in Bihar during last five years.

It may be noted that construction of arsenic safe wells in affected areas is as per felt need and site requirement and, thus, no specific fund is being allocated in this regard.

ANNEXURE

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (b) OF UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1698 TO BE ANSWERED IN RAJYA SABHA ON 18.12.2023 REGARDING “REDUCING ARSENIC AND FLUORIDE LEVELS IN GROUNDWATER”.

Arsenic Affected States (Partly affected): Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Daman & Diu, West Bengal, Puducherry (**Total 25 States & UTs**).

Fluoride Affected States (Partly affected): Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Daman & Diu (**Total 27 States & UTs**).
