

Need for establishment of a health and research institute like AIIMS in Kishanganj, Bihar-laid

**DR. MOHAMMAD JAWED (KISHANGANJ):** According to the 2021 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), Kishanganj is the poorest district in Bihar, with 64.75% of its population living in poverty. In 2022, the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) and the Geological Survey of India released a report indicating that the amount of uranium in groundwater in nine districts of Bihar, including Kishanganj, exceeded the WHO-prescribed limit. The consumption of uranium-contaminated water can cause thyroid cancer, blood cancer, bone marrow depression, and kidney disease. The Chairman of the Bihar State Pollution Control Board noted that uranium is a chemo-toxic and nephrotoxic heavy metal, particularly affecting the kidneys and bones. A study of the elderly in Kishanganj revealed high prevalence rates of anemia (63.75%), cataracts (61.25%), and hypertension (50.63%). Another study identified contamination of drinking water in Kishanganj with heavy metal ions like chromium, copper, and fluoride, resulting in dental fluorosis in 53.6% and skeletal fluorosis in 11.2% of the population. The absence of Government-run hospitals forces residents to rely on private hospitals, exacerbating poverty due to medical expenses. Many residents seek treatment for terminal illnesses like cancer in hospitals outside the district. Establishing a Government-backed health and research institute like AIIMS in Kishanganj could address health challenges effectively.