

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:257

ANSWERED ON:08.12.2006

CONTAMINATED WATER

Reddy Shri Suravaram Sudhakar;Yadav Shri Giridhari

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether several lakhs of people residing in rural areas are forced to consume highly contaminated drinking water with fluoride, iron, nitrate, arsenic and saline salts;
- (b) if so, the areas/districts identified in the country where the contamination is beyond permissible limits, State-wise;
- (c) whether the Union Government along with State Governments have initiated any schemes to reduce the contamination in drinking water;
- (d) if so, the details thereof along with the success achieved in this regard;
- (e) whether any special package has been announced in this regard and if so, the details thereof;
- (f) the funds released and utilized for supply of uncontaminated water during each of the last 3 years and current year, State-wise;
- (g) the further action proposed to be taken by the Union Government for supply of safe drinking water in the affected areas of the country; and
- (h) the details of water testing facilities, State-wise?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH)

(a) to (h) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN PARTS (a) to (h) OF REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 257 DUE FOR REPLY ON 08.12.2006

(a) & (b) No, Sir. 96.13% of the 14,22,303 rural habitations in the country have been fully covered, and 3.55 % partially covered with safe drinking water supply as per the stipulated norms. Chemical contamination in ground water sources is mainly due to geogenic reasons. However, due to overexploitation of groundwater and other factors some of the drinking water sources become chemically contaminated and unsafe. The quality of drinking water of various sources is periodically monitored by the District Water Quality Testing Laboratories with reference to the water quality standards laid down by the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission (RGNDWM) as per IS:10500 standard. In some habitations, dual water supply policy is promoted and State Governments have been advised to mark unsafe/contaminated drinking water source with red paint to ensure that people do not use the same for drinking and cooking purposes but can be used for other purposes like washing and bathing. The number of water quality affected habitations in the country compiled as on 1.4.2006, as reported by State Governments in their Bharat Nirman Action Plans as per water quality survey ordered in March 2000, is 1,95,813. State-wise details are given in the Annex-I.

(c) to (e) & (g) Rural drinking water is a State subject. Government of India provides financial and technical assistance to States through a Centrally Sponsored scheme, namely Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP), for supply of drinking water as per the stipulated norms. For tackling water quality problems due to chemical contamination a Sub-Mission programme was introduced in 1992-93 under ARWSP with funding pattern of 75:25 between the Centre and States. With effect from 1/4/1998, the State Governments were delegated powers to sanction projects under the Sub-Mission programme for which funds earmarked for water quality were to be utilized. 15% of ARWSP funds released to States were earmarked for tackling water quality problems, and 5 % for taking up source sustainability measures like rainwater harvesting and water recharging. These measures, inter-alia, reduce contamination of ground water based drinking water sources. Fully covered States could utilize more funds for tackling water quality problems with the approval of Government of India. Following water quality tackling measures were taken up by the State/Central Governments under the Sub-Mission Programme :-

I. Setting up of de-fluoridation plants, de-salination plants, arsenic removal plants for existing ground water schemes, treatment and filtration plants.

II. Providing Community de-fluoridation plants and domestic level filters.

III. Aeration for treatment of iron contaminated water.

IV. Marking of safe and unsafe sources and social mobilization for usage of safe sources for drinking and cooking purposes.

V. Single and multi-village piped water schemes from alternative distant ground water/surface source.

The Twelfth Finance Commission has earmarked funds for tackling water quality problems in the acutely affected States e.g. Andhra Pradesh (Rs.325 crore), West Bengal (Rs.600 crore), Rajasthan (Rs.150 crore) and Haryana (Rs.100 crore).

The States have been asked to adopt an integrated approach to cover quality affected habitations by utilizing treatment units/domestic filters, rooftop rainwater harvesting structures, piped water schemes and recharging/ strengthening of existing safe source and watershed based activities. With effect from 1/4/2006, under the Revised Sub-Mission programme under ARWSP it has been decided to retain upto 20% of ARWSP funds at the Centre and release funds only to State Governments which have water quality problems.

Various measures undertaken by the State Governments supported by the Central Government result in reduction in number of quality affected habitations however, side by side some new quality affected habitations emerge from time to time due to over-exploitation of ground water. State Governments such as Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat have reported coverage and reduction in number of quality-affected habitations.

The Government has already launched the Bharat Nirman programme under which, all water quality problems in the country with priority to arsenic, fluoride and salinity contamination, are to be addressed in a phased manner during the period 2005-06 to 2008-09.

(f) The State-wise releases made under ARWSP during the last 3 years are given at Annex-2. 15% of these funds were earmarked for tackling water quality. State-wise releases made for the year 2006-07 as on 30/11/2006 against the allocations for tackling water quality problems under Revised Sub-Mission Programme of ARWSP is given at Annex-3.

(h) The State-wise number of district water quality testing laboratories existing in the country as on 30/11/2006, as per information available from States, is enclosed at Annex-4. A community based National Rural Drinking Water Quality Monitoring and Surveillance Programme has been launched in the country which aims at testing of all drinking water sources by the Grass-root level workers in each Panchayat by simple- to-use field test kits. One Field test kit would be provided to each Gram Panchayat in the country for this purpose. The positively tested samples would then be tested at the District/State level laboratories for confirmation. Funds to the extent of Rs 57.84 crore have been released to all States during February/March 2006 under this Programme, which include IEC activities, HRD activities, procurement of field test kits, etc. State-wise funds released for the purpose is enclosed as Annex-5.