

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO.10
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 11TH DECEMBER, 2018
FLUORIDE CONTAMINATION IN RURAL PUNJAB**

***10. SHRI PARTAP SINGH BAJWA:**

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has taken cognisance of a study by Punjab State Council for Science and Technology which showed high fluoride content in drinking water in rural Punjab;
- (b) if so, whether Government has taken any concrete steps to increase awareness and change the situation on the ground;
- (c) the concrete steps that have been taken under National Programme of Prevention and Control of Fluorosis to tackle the issue in rural Punjab;
- (d) whether Government has considered long-term solutions besides awareness, diagnosis and medication to reduce presence of fluoride in ground-water and drinking water sources; and
- (e) if so, the details and results thereof?

**ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
(SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA)**

(a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 10* FOR 11TH DECEMBER, 2018**

(a) Yes, the Punjab Government has taken cognizance of the Study conducted by Punjab State Council for Science and Technology showing high Fluoride content in the ground water of Rural Punjab leading to Anaemia in pregnant women.

(b) Yes, Government of Punjab is taking concrete steps to increase awareness among the rural population of Punjab. Secretary, Water Supply and Sanitation, Punjab has ordered on 18.10.2018 to organize various Awareness and Training Courses for disseminating the information. The Steps taken by Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Punjab, to increase awareness is as follows:

- NPPCF cell has been established in district Ferozepur & District Sangrur where Consultants & Lab technicians have been posted for the implementation of Programme.
- IEC activities are conducted to make people are made aware about high fluoride level especially in hand-pump water, so are advised to consume water from RO's installed in villages.
- People are made aware about the harmful effect of consumption of water with high fluoride level on their teeth, joints and other body organs.
- Diet counselling is done to avoid fluoride containing water, food, dental products and drugs and to improve the diet with focus on essential nutrients.
- IEC activities are being conducted through conducting trainings of doctors, paramedical staff, teachers and other health staff.

No of Persons covered for health education	Sangrur	Ferozepur
	30793	5936

(c): The Department of Water Supply and Sanitation, Punjab is doing joint activities along with Department of Health and Family Welfare under National Programme for Prevention and Control of Fluorosis. The various activities that have been taken under National Programme of Prevention and Control of Fluorosis to tackle the issue in rural Punjab are as follows:

- Community Surveys & School Surveys have been done from time to time to identify the cases of dental and skeletal fluorosis, urine and water samples were collected for Fluoride estimations as per the details given below:

District	School Surveys done	Community Surveys Done	Urine Samples tested	Urine samples with high fluoride level	Water Samples tested	Water samples with high fluoride level
Sangrur	768	3136	3445	2609	2427	254
Ferozpur	129	1080	2618	1634	1047	399

- In Fluoride affected areas, regular IEC activities are being done to make people aware about the fluoride contamination and its preventive measures including diet modification to prevent fluorosis.
- Routine monthly testing of 5 water samples & 5 urine Samples for fluoride estimations is done in both the districts.
- Regular screening of dental fluorosis during the routine Dental OPDs by Dental Surgeons is done in both the districts.

(d) & (e): As far as reduction of Fluoride in Ground Water is concerned, it is informed that Fluoride presence in ground water is geo-genic and therefore, its presence in water is natural. However, Government of Punjab is implementing Long Term Solutions, by shifting the source of these affected villages from Ground Water to Surface Water because Surface Water is free from Fluoride and other chemical contaminations. Deeper Tube-wells/Water Treatment Plants are also being proposed as Long Term Measures for fluoride affected habitations where surface water availability is not feasible. Further, till the long term solutions are implemented and commissioned, Government of Punjab has installed/is installing RO plants as Short Term Measures. So far, there are total 411 villages affected with high concentration of Fluoride. Out of total 411 Fluoride affected habitations, 204 habitations are being covered with Surface water supply schemes for which projects have already been approved. Apart from this, 66 Fluoride affected habitations, where surface water is not feasible, are being covered with Deep Tubewells as long term solutions. Additionally, 152 villages have been/are being covered with RO plants as Short Term Measures. Water & Sanitation department is planning to provide safe water for drinking in Arsenic/Fluoride affected areas through the single village canal based/deep tube-well based piped water supply and through water treatment plants.